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STARS IN WWII

VOLUME II

AMERICA IN WWII SPECIAL ISSUE

MOVIE STARS AT WAR!

IN THE MILITARY AND ON THE SET

★ STARRING ★

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Eddie Albert
Henry Fonda
Jackie Coogan
Bea Arthur

...and many, many more!

Tony Curtis

Brian Keith

Marlene Dietrich

Actor and army lieutenant Ronald Reagan, spring 1942

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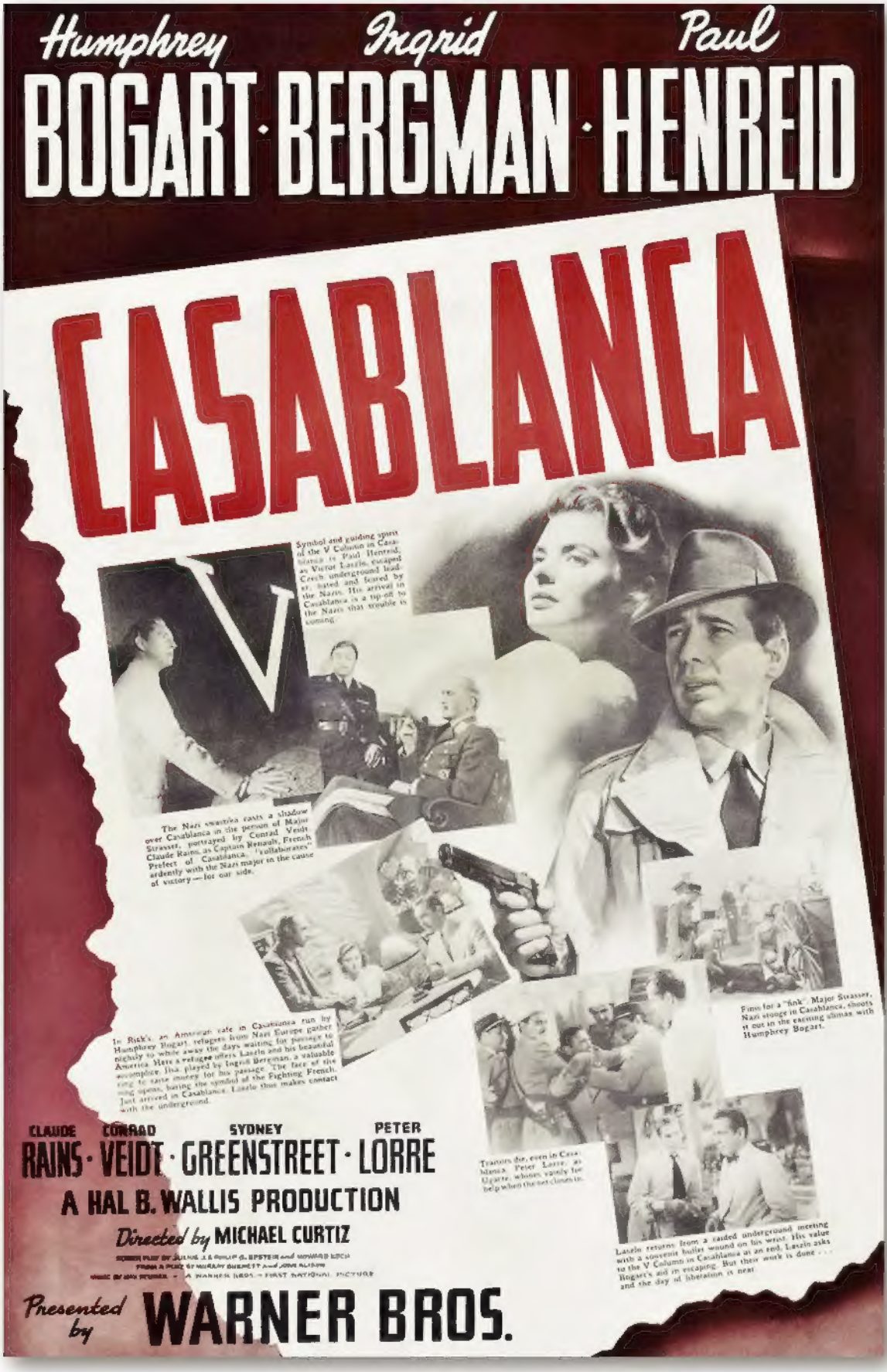
Humphrey Ingrid Paul
BOGART · BERGMAN · HENREID
CASABLANCA
V
Symbol and guiding spirit of the V Colonies in Casablanca is Paul Henreid, as Victor Laszlo, escaped Czech underground leader, hated and feared by the Nazis. His arrival in Casablanca is a tip-off to the Nazis that trouble is coming.
The Nazi swastika casts a shadow over Casablanca in the person of Major Strasser, portrayed by Conrad Veidt. Claude Rains, as Captain Renault, French Prefect of Casablanca, "collaborates" ardently with the Nazi major to the cause of victory—for our side.
In Rick's, an American cafe in Casablanca run by Humphrey Bogart, refugees from Nazi Europe gather nightly to while away the days waiting for passage to America. Here a refugee offers Laszlo and his beautiful accomplice, Ilsa, played by Ingrid Bergman, a valuable ring to raise money for his passage. The face of the ring opens, having the symbol of the Fighting French. Just arrived in Casablanca, Laszlo thus makes contact with the underground.
Pinned for a "fink", Major Strasser, Nazi stooge in Casablanca, shoots it out in the evening climax with Humphrey Bogart.
Traitors die, even in Casablanca. Peter Lorre, as Ugarte, whines vainly for help when the net closes in.
Laszlo returns from a raided underground meeting with a souvenir bullet wound on his wrist. His value to the V Colonies in Casablanca at an end, Laszlo asks Bogart's aid in escaping. But their work is done . . . and the day of liberation is near.
CLAUDE RAINS · CONRAD VEIDT · SYDNEY GREENSTREET · PETER LORRE
A HAL B. WALLIS PRODUCTION
Directed by MICHAEL CURTIZ
SCREEN PLAY BY JULIUS J. & PHILIP G. EPSTEIN and HOWARD KOCH
FROM A PLAY BY MURRAY BURNETT and JOAN ALISON
MUSIC BY MAX STEINER — A WARNER BROS.-FIRST NATIONAL PICTURE
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STARS IN WWII

VOLUME II

AMERICA IN WWII SPECIAL ISSUE

FEATURES

6 When Movies Ruled the Roost By Carl Zebrowski

9 Dear Virginia A Hollywood pinup girl of World War II and the GI letters she saved. From the Collection of Darrell English

16 Gene Autry Gets his Wings Hollywood's Singing Cowboy traded his horse, his hat—but not his boots—for the pilot's seat of an army plane overseas. By Richard Sassaman

22 Marlene Dietrich, Voice of the OSS To the CIA's forerunner—the Office of Strategic Services—the German-born star with the sultry voice was a weapon aimed at Hitler's boys in uniform. By John E. Stanchak

28 The Real Deal Whether they were stars before, during, or after the war, these and many other actors wore real military uniforms—not just costumes from studio wardrobes—during World War II.

COVER SHOT: *Leaving his Warner Brothers acting career in April 1942, Second Lieutenant Ronald Reagan of the 323rd Cavalry grins for a publicity shot after being activated for WWII service. Bad eyes will keep him stateside.* WARNER BROS. PHOTO. *AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION*

THIS SPREAD: *Actors (from left) Alan Hale, Ronald Reagan, Errol Flynn, and Ronald Sinclair play shot-down British bomber crewmen struggling to evade Germans, in Warner Brothers' 1942 film* Desperate Journey. *Reagan, an army reserve officer, was called to active duty during filming. His scenes had to be shot hurriedly before he left.* WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

38 John Wayne's War Hollywood's favorite movie hero talked tough on screen. Why didn't he enlist for service in World War II? **By John E. Stanchak**

46 The Mouse Versus Der Führer The Axis nearly wrecked Walt Disney's animated film enterprise. But Mickey, Donald, and the Disney creative arsenal helped wreck the Axis instead. **By David Lesjak**

56 Hanging On with Hitchcock Critics said Alfred Hitchcock left England just in time to avoid Nazi bombs. But in Hollywood, he made films to help win the war. **By John E. Stanchak**

62 Sherlock Holmes, Time Traveler How did a 19th-century detective straight out of Victorian London end up thwarting Nazi plots in 20th-century World War II? **By David Norris**

68 Sinatramania! Fever for the 'Voice' One winter's night in 1942, a horde of screaming bobby-soxers turned young Frank Sinatra from a singer into an idol. **By Tom Huntington**

74 Scandal! in Hollywood Movie idol Errol Flynn had a way with the ladies. But when two teenage girls said he had his way with them, the news bumped the war off page one. **By John E. Stanchak**

80 Bat an Eyelash, Sell a Bond Hollywood's lovely ladies put their beauty to work selling war bonds to finance victory over the Axis threat. **By Carl Zebrowski**

82 Hollywood Pinups of WWII The beauties of the silver screen went to war with America's fighting men via glamorous pinups that made GI hearts race—and reminded them that life and romance awaited after the war.

90 Bridge on the River Kwai A dozen years after World War II, an Oscar-winning film with a whistled opening march set the standard for every WWII movie to come. **By Mark Weisenmiller**

DEPARTMENTS

Cover 2, 5, 8, 15, 55, 89 **Flashbacks**

4 Publisher's Welcome

96 Closing Frame

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Your connection to World War II America

A World War II Time Machine

AT AGE 55, I'VE GIVEN UP ON TIME TRAVEL. But for those of you who, like me, *wish* you had a time machine (a reliable one that *always* brings you home), perhaps the closest you can come to fulfilling your wish is watching an old movie.

Of course, movies aren't reality. They're supposed to *feel* real while you're watching them, but there's something inherently dreamlike about most non-documentary film. And even in documentaries, the very act of pointing a camera at people changes their behavior, altering reality. That said, an old movie somehow manages to create a bubble, an immersion experience that lets you gather a sense of the time and culture in which the film was made. You're bombarded with the sounds, style, speech, visuals, technology, social mores and taboos—the milieu of the time. And it's fascinating!

The movies of the World War II era are a real blessing for historians, professional and amateur alike. They allow anyone to step back in time and feel, to some extent, what WWII America and Americans were like. Besides that, it was the golden age of Hollywood, and many of the era's films are rightly classics, as engaging today as ever.

When we look into the lives of the actors who made these movies, or the people who watched them, served in the war, and then stepped into Hollywood themselves, we get another perspective. They were real flesh-and-blood human beings. Their lives weren't movies (and those who tried to live life in cinematic style often have the most tragic stories). They struggled with the arrival of war, grappled with weighty, life-altering decisions about what they should do in a period of national and international crisis.

"I don't want to be in a fake war in a studio," actor Henry Fonda announced upon joining the navy. Others desperately wanted to go to the front, but were held back by physical limitations (bad eyesight in the case of our cover subject, Ronald Reagan) or societal restrictions (as in the case of many women). All of them were people with hopes and dreams, relationships, worries.

In this special issue, we've tried to bring you stories about actors who went to war, about veterans of the front or home front who went on to Hollywood careers, and about the whole phenomenon that lyricist Johnny Mercer called "that screwy, ballyhooey Hollywood" in his 1937 song "Hooray for Hollywood." We've tried to pick up where STARS IN WWII, Volume I, left off back in 2010. But we don't pretend we've covered everybody or everything here! No, we look forward to still more volumes of STARS IN WWII in the future.

So now, grab some popcorn, and dive in! When you're done, perhaps you'll be inspired to cue up a WWII-era movie, and head back in time to the 1940s...

Jim Kushlan

Jim Kushlan
Publisher/*America in WWII* magazine

COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

REPUBLIC PICTURES • PREMIERED IN 1942

WHEN movies RULED THE ROOST

by Carl Zebrowski

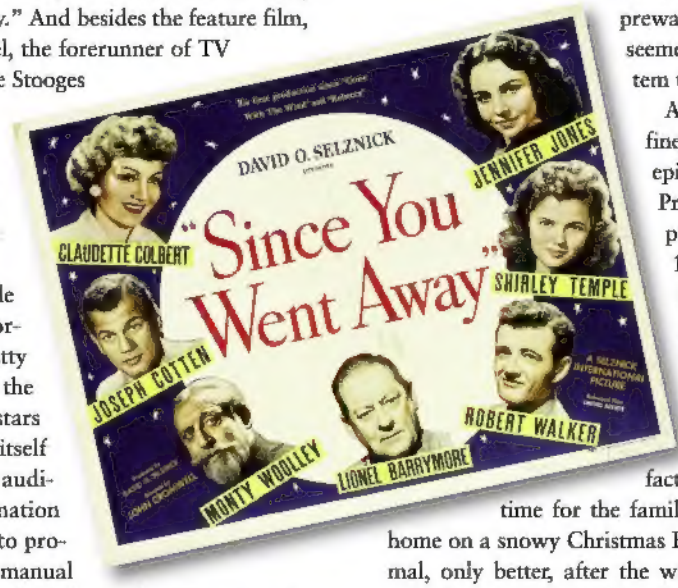
BEFORE THE AGE OF TELEVISION, movies ruled the media. Film had an almost mystical power, a quality that transcended a picture being worth a thousand words. Nearly 100 million people went to the movies weekly during World War II. That was three out of every four men, women, and children in the country. Movie studio revenues reached all-time highs of well over $1 billion a year.

Though ticket prices rose 33 percent, a movie outing remained a good value for wartime Americans who, thanks to war-related jobs, had more disposable income than during the Depression. "It only cost 25 cents to go to the movies then," remembered Barbara Kiser of Chicago at www.nhs.needham.k12.ma.us. "It cost 5 cents each way on the streetcar, 10 cents for the movie, with 5 cents left over to buy candy." And besides the feature film, theater-goers got to see a newsreel, the forerunner of TV news, and a short or two. A Three Stooges episode was a possibility. So was an installment of a serial adventure that ended with the hero on the verge of disaster, a cliffhanger designed to bring the viewer back the following week.

Well aware of how many people flocked to the silver screen to worship the likes of Bing Crosby, Betty Grable, and Gary Cooper, and of the mesmerizing influence the superstars had, the government positioned itself to take advantage of the captive audience. The Office of War Information (OWI), established in June 1942 to promote the war effort, distributed a manual to advise film studios what to put in their movies. The manual's message boiled down to "Will this picture help win the war?" Lest there be any confusion, the OWI answered that question for the studios, reviewing screenplays and offering rewrite suggestions. Though the OWI had no power to censor films, it leveraged all the clout it needed by working with the Office of Censorship, which controlled what movies the studios could ship to the lucrative foreign markets.

So, due in part to what interested a people at war and in part to the strong-arming of the OWI, movies of the early 1940s focused on fostering a patriotic atmosphere that encouraged people to make sacrifices for the war effort. About 30 percent of movies released during this time related directly to the war. "That was very important to people who had someone overseas...," recalled actress Kitty Carlisle Hart in an interview published at www.pbs.org. "Everyone cared about those war movies."

At the OWI's insistence, movies presented an idealized war. "In the movies we would always win the war," recalled Carolina San Angelo of Naugatuck, Connecticut, at www.vm.uconn.edu. Germans were painstakingly distinguished from the sinister Nazis among them. The Japanese were not so generously treated. They were unfailingly depicted as myopic devotees of a warmongering emperor. "The Hollywood war movies...always depicted the enemy as sneering and sadistic barbarians," recalled Robert F. Gallagher of Chicago at www.gallagher.com. "We began to really hate the people of the enemy countries, not just their leaders...." At the same time, Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin was made to appear not nearly so brutal as his prewar résumé suggested. And the British seemed eager to eliminate their class system that so annoyed Americans.



America herself was presented at her finest. *Since You Went Away* was the epitome of the utopian wartime film. Producer David O. Selznick, who had produced *Gone with the Wind* in 1939, loaded the movie with stars—Shirley Temple, Claudette Colbert, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, and Lionel Barrymore—and with every conceivable wartime cliché, from dad joining the military, mom taking a job in a war-production factory, and black maid working overtime for the family for no extra pay, to dad coming home on a snowy Christmas Eve and everything returning to normal, only better, after the war. Contrived as it was, the movie earned nine Academy Award nominations.

Three years into America's involvement in the global conflict, the public had tired of thinking about the war all the time. Hollywood responded and its films began to lean more toward what has always been its forte: pure escapism. When war *was* depicted, grim realism rather than rosy optimism became the norm, as in *The Story of GI Joe*, based on the firmly grounded writings of war correspondent Ernie Pyle.

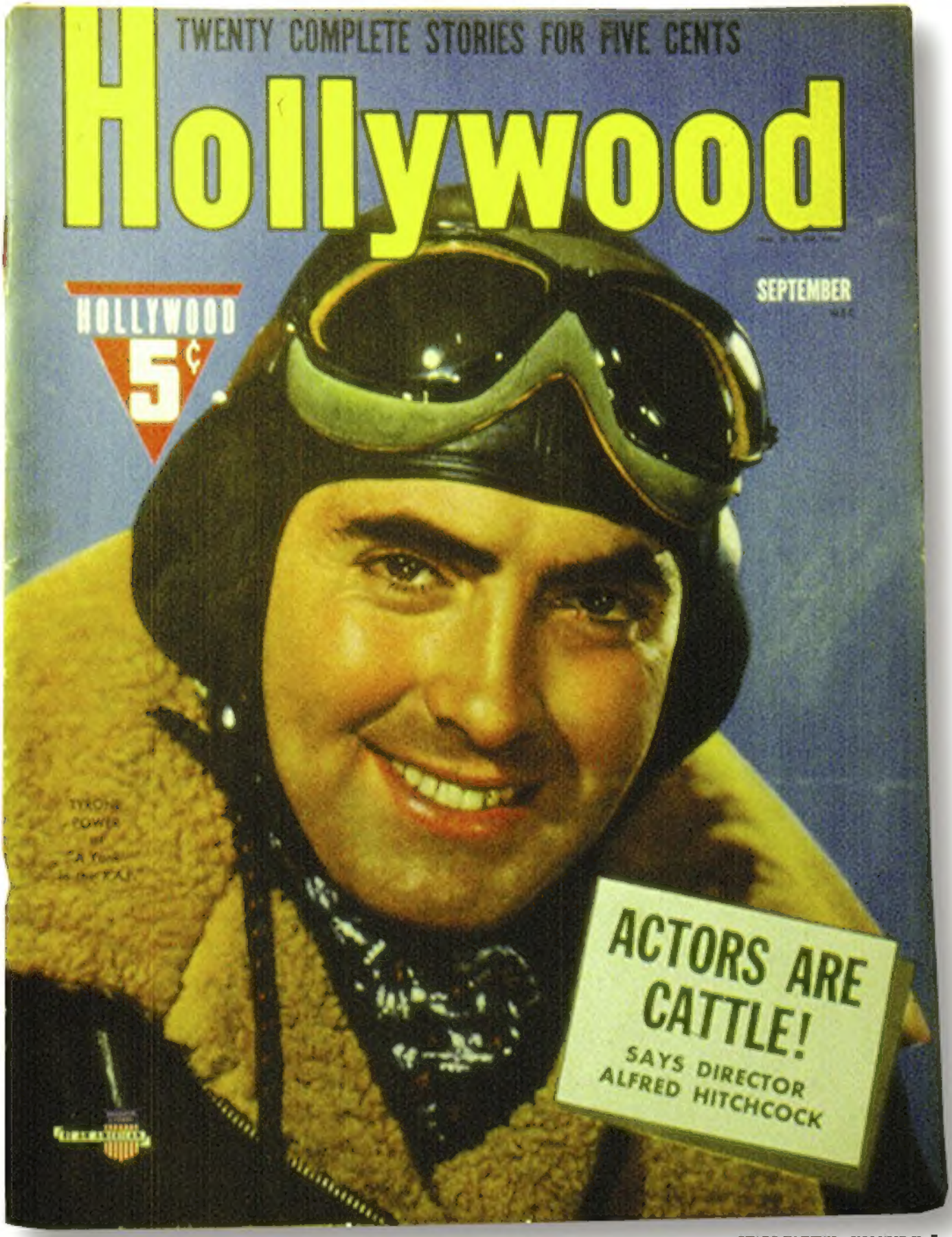
By war's end Hollywood could boast that it built morale, supplied an essential escape, and still managed to produce some classics, including the masterpiece *Casablanca*. And all the while it posted record profits. Not bad for a town of celluloid heroes. ★

CARL ZEBROWSKI, *the editor of* America in WWII *magazine, writes about the WWII home front and its music in each issue.*

ABOVE & OPPOSITE: *AMERICA IN WWII* COLLECTION

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII*, APRIL 2006

Above: 1944's *Since You Went Away* touched a nerve on the home front. Claudette Colbert played a wife whose husband was fighting overseas and whose daughter was in love with a GI. Opposite: Tyrone Power, star of *A Yank in the RAF*, gets the spotlight on *Hollywood* magazine's September 1941 cover. Power joined the Marine Corps in August 1942 and flew transport planes in the Pacific.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ACTORS ARE CATTLE!
SAYS DIRECTOR ALFRED HITCHCOCK

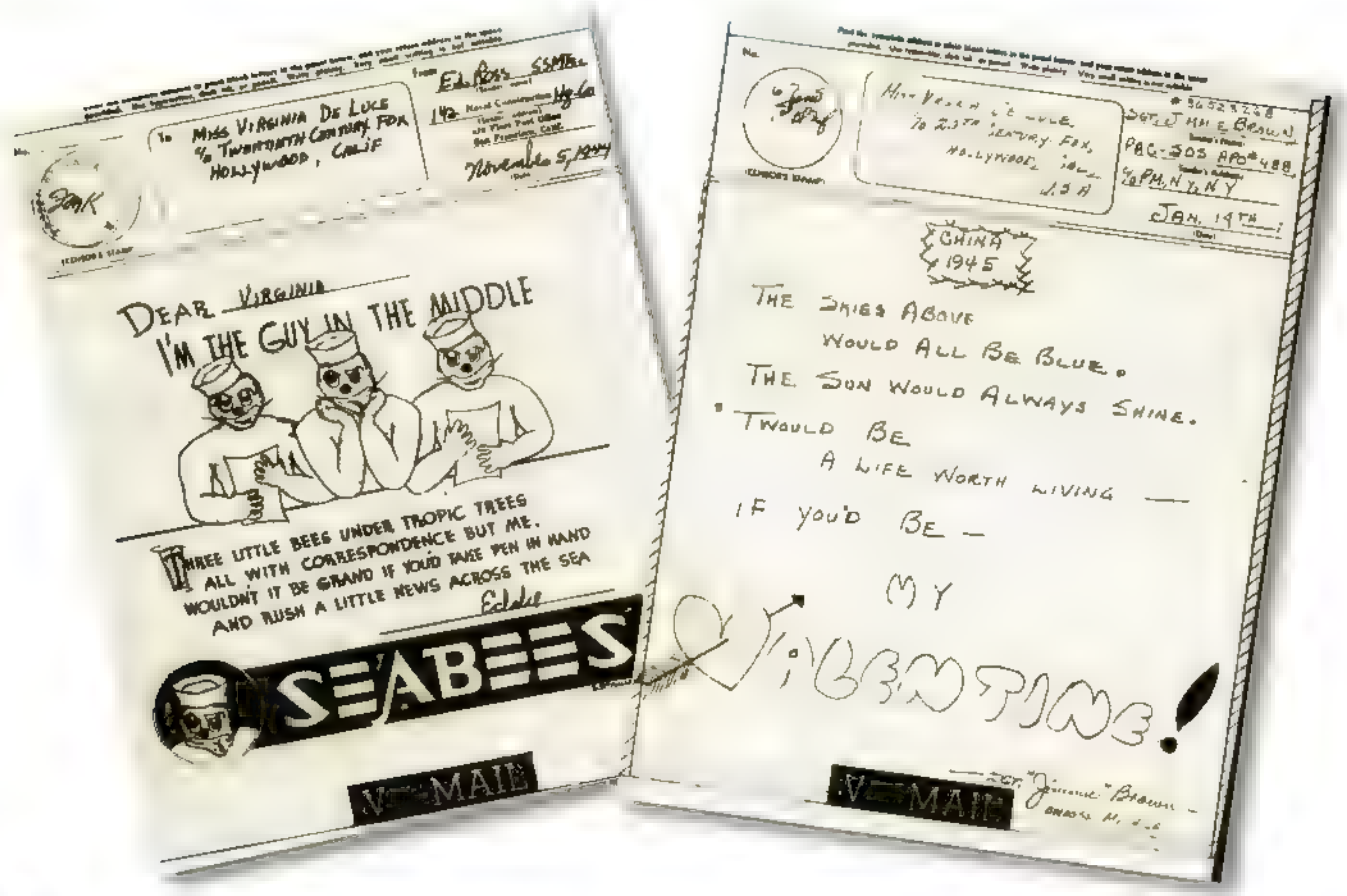
COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER • PREMIERED IN 1942

dear VIRGINIA

A Hollywood pinup girl of World War II and the GI letters she saved

from the collection of Darrell English



VIRGINIA DE LUCE (LATER VIRGINIA WILSON) *was a Hollywood bombshell who quickened the pulse of servicemen on every front. Born in San Francisco in 1921, De Luce was a 20-something blonde beauty when America entered World War II. Her publicity shots sent GIs racing for pen and paper to request pinups for their tents, foxholes, footlockers, or barracks walls*

It wasn't unusual for a starlet to get mail from GIs begging for photos. What was unusual was for her to keep those GI letters as treasure for the rest of her life. That's just what De Luce did.

De Luce's career spanned cabarets, Broadway, and Hollywood She was a dancer in the 1943 Laurel and Hardy movie Jitterbugs, *but her biggest career boost came after the war in the Broadway hit* New Faces of 1952, *and in the show's film version. On TV, she was a semi-regular on the* Tonight Show *with Jack Paar, and appeared in other shows.*

As De Luce's career faded in the 1970s, she devoted herself to causes. She was involved with the American Indian Movement, within which she was known as Blue Dove, but ended up testifying against two AIM members in connection with a 1974 murder in California.

De Luce spent her last years in New England, eventually moving to a rustic cabin in Charlmont, Massachusetts. In March

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF DARRELL ENGLISH

Seabee Eddie Ross (whose lively Seabee V-Mail is at the top left) and army Sergeant Jimmie Brown (whose V-Mail Valentine is at the top right) were among the legions of US servicemen who wrote to lovely actress Virginia De Luce, usually requesting pinups. Many starlets received such mail, but De Luce was unusual: she kept her GI letters her whole life long.

1997 her body was found sitting in a chair in her home. She had been dead for months.

As De Luce's estate was divided and sold, Massachusetts collector Darrell English learned about the actress's trove of WWII pinup requests. He managed to secure those letters, and we present a selection here, edited for length and clarity, but with original spelling and grammar whenever possible.

March 26, 1942

DEAR MISS WILSON,

...Saw the photograph of you in the *Daily Mirror* Wednesday, and thought it photogentically beautiful.

I would like to have a print of this picture if you have one. Expect to go to Fort Dix on the first of the month, and would like to take it with me

Whatever the charge is please let me know and I will send a check.

FRANK B. MURDOCK
Jersey City, New Jersey

March 28, 1943

DEAR MISS WILSON,

...I don't suppose you remember, but I was the lucky soldier to receive a war bond presented by you for which I am deeply grateful to you + all your coworkers at the Canteen.... I would appreciate it very much if you could send me a picture of yourself + hope it wouldn't be too much trouble in doing so...,

CARMEN HILI
Company B, 4th Armored Signal Battalion, Desert Training Center, California

May 16, 1944

DEAR MISS LUCE,

After seeing your picture in *Life* recently I was prompted to write and see if it was possible to get a picture of you—I would like very much to have one, so if possible and if you have an old one laying around please send it to the above address.

WILLIAM A. RANKIN
147th Army Airways Communications Squadron, Palau Isles

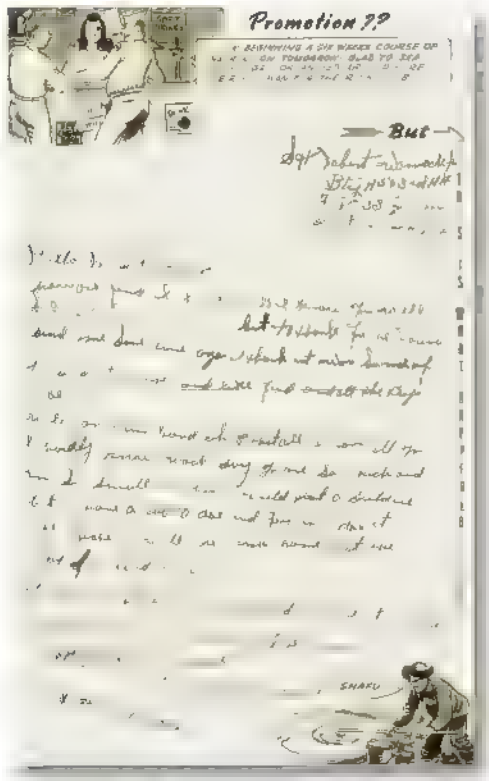
July 11, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA,

...From this end of the world I'd like to request a picture Virginia. And I promise a grass skirt of the best native quality but not quanity. So help me its the best I can do.

In about 10 minutes we go on candles so I must close. The light bill you know.

SERGEANT R. "DICK" HERSHEY
6th Combat Camera Unit, US Army, Pacific theater



Opposite: This leggy pinup of De Luce—signed for the "Fighting 726th"—was exactly what the actress's GI correspondents were looking for. Above: Sergeant Robert Womack's stationery reflects a typically cynical view of army life, but his note to De Luce is humble and touching.

August 19, 1944

DEAR MISS LUCE

There has been considerable commotion in the "Signal Force" since discovering your picture in the News Week [*Newsweek*]. Every one at once agreed that you were strictly 4.0. My self I say 4.0 Plus

We are on an aircraft carrier and most of us have been aboard here since before the war. She is the only carrier to receive the "Presidential Unit Citation." So you can see we are very proud of her.... The boys have all agreed that if you would send us an autographed picture of your self that you would be our number one "Pin up Girl." By the way you are the first girl we have asked to be the "Pin up One...."

SIGNALMAN 2ND CLASS JOHN KENNY WITHERS
USS *Enterprise (CV-6)*, at sea

August 19, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

I am a U.S.N. Seabee, stationed out here in various parts of the Pacific. I have been out here so long now it's pitiful. I am writing you in the extreme hopes of obtaining an autographed photo of you, and would deeply appreciate it if you would sign it:—"To Bob, with best wishes."— Would you, please? ...Your picture is hanging all over this camp. Boy, you sure made a big hit out here....

"Seabee"-ing you,

SEAMAN 1ST CLASS R.V. "BOB" WALL
Naval Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit 531, Pacific theater

August 23, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE—

...Photos of pretty girls mean so much to those us of in the Southwest Pacific that I'm wondering whether you'd be kind enough to let me have an autographed pinup photo of yourself. It would boost our morale and help decorate an otherwise drab tent in the jungle....

CORPORAL HERTZ ROSENBAUM
Battery B, 70th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Gun Battalion, Pacific theater

September 30, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

I am writing you this letter as you are to me the sweetest pinup-girl in the world to me and I would like very much to have you send one of your self to me as I am a long way's from home and I am in the army and we are doing a good job over here in the South Pacific and hope to get to go back home soon after the war is over here. I have been away a long time and have seen some of your pictures and I like them very much and hope to see some more soon but when I get this pin-up from you I won't have to go to far to look at your sweet face for you are like a queen, so easy to look at and so good to be with. Well as I don't

know much about writeing a letter about something like this I will hang my close on this line and hope to hear from you soon and when you send the picture write a letter to me for I would like to have it to keep as long as I live....

PRIVATE LEWIS MCDONALD
Battery C, 471st Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalion, US Army, South Pacific

October 19, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA:

I would like very much to have one of your personally autographed pin-ups. I have tried to collect some pictures of you out of some books we have here but some one always steals them when I am gone from my quarters. If I get some large ones of you I will guard them with my very life. I will send, by return mail, any amount you wish to charge for them....

CORPORAL CHARLES F. "CHUCK" LOEWE
Headquarters Battery, 591st Anti-aircraft Artillery (Automatic Weapons) Battalion, Aleutian Islands

October 19, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA:

...Yes, Virginia, when we saw your picture with the caption "Something For The Boys" we certainly stopped to think how nice an American girl looks.

At the present time with the miserable, damp, rainy weather we are having a glance at you certainly lifts one's morale.... May we have your autographed picture to carry with us wherever we go. ?

THE BOYS OF THE 445TH
445th Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalion, Luxembourg

October 25, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE:

...You will probably think me very forward in my request, but I would certainly appreciate one of your autographed pictures. This particular part of Italy hasn't one bit of glamour to it, and the women are most unattractive....

SERGEANT DAVID R. "RONNY" WALLACE
742nd Bomb Squadron, 455th Bomb Group, Italy

November 4, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE:

My Pal and I saw your picture in *Newsweek* special for Armed Forces and we thought you should be the girl we would like to have in our fox hole during an air raid.

We would like two good size pictures of you....

CORPORAL TEX NEWTON
PRIVATE HAP LICATA
36th Fighter Control Squadron, Netherlands East Indies

November 5, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA,

...Your eyes are what the boys over here go for. They make your knees weak. I don't know wheather you are married or not but most of the boys over here hope you aren't.

I guess you will wonder about the stationary, well I have just returned from Peleliu. The paper belonged to a fellow that won't be needing it anymore....

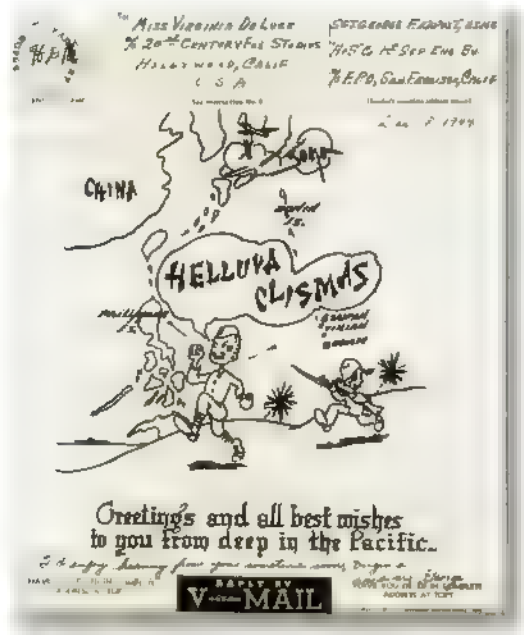
PRIVATE 1ST CLASS WILLIAM POWELL
Company B, 3rd Armored Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Southwest Pacific

November 14, 1944

MISS VIRGINIA DE LUCE,

...I am a Seaman, I am over sea in the South Pacific, on one of the Marianas Islands I have ben over sea one year.... Virginia we boys over hear have a job to do, an our Moral[e] have to be all the way up to 100%, for us to do a good job too theas old japs. By sending me one of your beautiful picture it will help me to do a good job.... Every time I will look at it, I can say this is what I am fighting for, then I will knock off a nother jap....

SEAMAN 1ST CLASS CARL JOSEPH CAGLIN
USNB Navy#3245 [navy postal code for Saipan]



Many letters to De Luce, like Sergeant Kapust's holiday V-Mail, included frontline humor.

November 16, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA,

I want to write and thank you for the very enjoyable moments you have given me.... I saw your picture in one of the magazines that are sent overseas to us, and you were so beautiful and your figure so exciting that I cut it out to keep with me. I looked at it many times, and it never failed to thrill me every time I looked at it.... I was hit by scrapnel over in Germany a few weeks ago, and unfortunately I lost your picture, so I am writing this letter to ask you for a replacement.

CORPORAL BILL VREELAND
258th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery B, England

November 28, 1944

DEAR MISS DE LUCE:

I've seen a cheesecake of you in many of my buddies tents and wondered I could have been so unlucky to have not been able to get one. Still my hopes are high because I have faith in you tho

I'm a stranger to you. Will you send me a personally auto graphed photo of yourself? I know I'll never hear from you.

CORPORAL GEORGE PARKER
US Army [location not on letter]

November 30, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA,

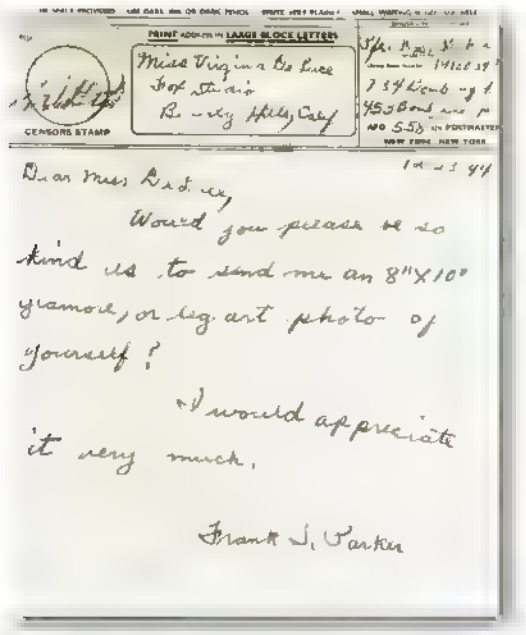
Could you send me and my buddie a couple copies of your picture? We have four walls here which are so darn blank its pitiful, its get awful tiresome just lookin at them so we thought if we got a couple of pictures it would ease the strain on our eyes....

TECHNICIAN 5TH GRADE A.G. SANBORN
342nd Signal Company Wing, Germany

December 29, 1944

DEAR VIRGINIA,

I received your pictures yesterday and they were really very



Some GIs boldly asked for exactly what they wanted—"leg art," in one GI's case.

beautiful. I really don't know how to thank you for them. They made my Christmas complete and even more so because I did not expect so much.... Much as it meant to me I had to tell [the other guys] I didn't know you personally. At that some of them still don't believe me, which I don't mind in the least....

CORPORAL KENNETH C. "KEN" HAWKINS
Air Warning Squadron No. 9, 1st Marine Air Wing, Pacific theater

February 27, 1945

DEAR VIRGINIA,

I wish to acknowledge the receipt of your lovely photo. Lovely is not the only word for it. It is beautiful! I waited a long time for it, but it was worth waiting for....

Perhaps there is something you can do for the boys overseas. We want pictures such as musical comedies, good drama and just plain comedy. Not the patriotic kind, we have seen enough of army pictures or anything that has to do with a soldier.... You, are an actress and I'm sure you're few words may help....

Au revoir et bonne chance,

IRVING L. MILGROM
Germany

May 11, 1945

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

I wish to congratulate you on your success + I wish you continued success + a long + happy career which I am sure you will have as you are very beautiful + talented. I was wondering if I could talk you out of [a] photo each for my two brothers who are in combat overseas + one for my self. We all three would be tickled to get one. I will send thier address below. I will close as I do not wish to bore you with a long + stuffy letter....

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS ELLIS TRULL
Los Angeles, California

May 14, 1945

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

Just a few lines to see if you would be so kind, as to send...one of your pictures, as I would like one very much.... One of your pictures would help a lot for we have no girls to go with over hear.... I will sign off for now, as time is slow, so hoping you will send the picture.

A lomson [lonesome] G.I.

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS JOHNNIE J. CLARK
Germany

July 12, 1945

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

I would appreciate it very much if you would please send me an autographed photo.... The boys in my outfit bet me you wouldn't send me your picture, so please help me show them how wrong they are....

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS EDDIE GREENBERG
Headquarters Platoon, Company D, 568th Signal Aircraft Warning Battalion, US Army, Western Pacific

July 14, 1945

DEAR MISS DE LUCE,

Please send me a pin up shot of you—preferably in a cute bathing suit. I also would like your measurements if I'm not too personal. "You" are the type of girl "I'd Like To Have In My Arms" on V J Day.

PRIVATE 1ST CLASS JIMMIE BUELL
US Army, Pacific theater

July 15, 1945

LOVELY VIRGINIA,

Here in the Pacific Theater...we would like very much to obtain a large photo of you modeling one of these bare Midriff swim suits, for our radio shacks where we hang out.

We could pick dozens of other lovelies, but we feel as if your magnificent loveliness is beyond any similar comparison, so please Miss De Luce see what you can do for our hungry souls.

Thanking you in advance, we remain your Tantalized Admirers
"THE FIGHTING 726"
726th Signal Aircraft Warning Company, US Army, Mariana Islands, South Pacific

August 5, 1945
DEAR MISS DELUCE:
...Being exiled in this land of ice, snow and desolate barreness there is very little for us to look forward to.... Words cannot tell you how much your picture would be appreciated both as a reminder to me of American pulchritude and also as a ray of sunshine in this drab army barrack....
SERGEANT FRANKLIN J. GOLPL
Greenland

August 6, 1945
DEAR MISS DE LUCE,
My buddy and I saw you a short time ago at the yacht club, and decided to write to you.... Virginia, we think you are beautiful...in fact the most beautiful girl we have ever seen in our lives. Your ravishing beauty captured both our hearts and we intend to see your show just as often as we can....
Virginia, will you please send us a photo of yourself? We want you for our pin up girl, and we'll appreciate any pictures you want to send...if you can spare a couple...
SEAMAN 1ST CLASS GEORGE BARTLESON AND DAVE WAITS
San Francisco, California

Irving Milgrom told De Luce GIs wanted musicals and comedies, not war movies.

September 13, 1945
DEAR VIRGINIA,
Here's hoping you are not offended by addressing you by your first name, instead of properly addressing you as, "Miss DeLuce." My friends call me, Bob. So! I hope you don't mind me calling you, Virginia.
Read your letter you sent into *Pic* magazine.
Noticed the picture you sent in.... Do you think I might have one picture like that one. (Did you say maybe.)
By the way young lady if you are not to busy a word of hello would be appreciated. Looking forward to see more of you in movies.
Coming to you from Okinawa
Stones throw from Toyko
STAFF SERGEANT R.L. "BOB" ROSS
12th Service Battalion, Service Command, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific

March 13, 1946
DEAR MISS DE LUCE,
Quite a few months ago on the island of New Guinea I chanced upon a pin up; needless to say, that pin up was of you. During my course of travel through New Guinea, Leyte, Sabou, Luzon, Okinawa, and now Japan, this pin up is slowly deteriorating to (FWT) fair, wear, and tear.
Your exciting pin up has been a great inspiration to me. In case you have a spare pin up to replace this one it would be appreciated to the utmost.
TECHNICAL SERGEANT LEE A. TADE
253rd Signal Heavy Construction Company, Tokyo, Japan
PS. Enclosed you will find Air Mail stamps so that I may view your beauty in the near future

[undated]
DEAR MISS DELUCE,
I am one of the many hungry G.I.'s way down in the jungles of New Guinea who loves having a picture of a pretty girl to look at when he isn't doing anything. So my dear I would appreciate it very much if you would send me your picture in a "Bathing Suit," Please.
PRIVATE RICHARD R. MILLER
Company D, 411 Engineer Battalion

[undated]
DEAR MISS DE LUCE,
...I am a Private stationed on the Ledo Road in Burma. Some of my Buddies and I are collecting Pin-ups for our tent. We would appreciate it very much if you would send us a picture of yourself. Also, will you please address a few sweet words to "Jim."
PRIVATE JIM JIMENEZ
700th Military Police Company

[undated]
DEAR VIRGINIA,
Writting a few lines to let you know how much I'd appreciate it very much if you would send me 2 large photo's of yourself, one for myself + one for my buddy who is unable to write because of injuries to the hand. Sign one to one as "Gig" + the other "Sed." Please don't let me down.
Your Admirer
PRIVATE 1ST CLASS "GIG" MIGLIONICO
1551st Army Air Force Base Unit, Guadalcanal

[undated]
DEAR MISS DE LUCE;
...I would like very much to have a plain, ordinary, every day photograph of you. You know the kind I mean, just a bust picture. I've seen so many pin up pictures that I'm getting tired of looking at them. If I continue much longer I'll be ready for a Section "8." That is why I make such a strange request. Of course if you want to enclose a pin up picture I'm sure the boys would be glad to have it. How's about it kid?
VAN
[location not on letter]

DARRELL ENGLISH *has built a large collection of WWII papers, photos, and artifacts. He used part of it to establish the New England Holocaust Institute in Adams, Massachusetts.*

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII*, OCTOBER 2011

Man alive, just picture this excitement!
BOMBER CREW CRASH-LANDS IN THE HEART OF GERMANY! AND OFF THEY GO ON A 5-MAN COMMANDO RAID TO BERLIN AND BACK! A SCREAMING, SCREEN-SHAKING ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME ADVENTURE!
ERROL FLYNN
RONALD REAGAN
Desperate Journey
NANCY COLEMAN · RAYMOND MASSEY
ALAN HALE · ARTHUR KENNEDY
Directed by RAOUL WALSH
Produced by HAL B. WALLIS
Presented by WARNER BROS.

COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

WARNER BROS. PICTURES • PREMIERED IN 1942

GENE AUTRY gets his wings

Hollywood's Singing Cowboy traded his horse, his hat—but not his boots—for the pilot's seat of an army plane overseas.

by Richard Sassaman

IT WAS EARLY 1942. The United States was gearing up for war, and film studio chief Herbert Yates was fighting mad. He wasn't mad at the enemy, though. The founder and president of Republic Pictures was mad at his biggest star, Gene "the Singing Cowboy" Autry, who planned to join the army.

Autry, born in rural Texas as Orvon Grover Autry in 1907, had debuted as a singer in 1929, recording cowboy songs—something he would keep doing over 35 years for more than 50 different labels (including the American Record Corporation, also headed by Yates). He appeared on the scene just as the movies switched from silent to sound with 1927's *The Jazz Singer*. Tailor-made for the new Hollywood, Autry ended up in 90 feature films.

Republic Pictures' 1935 release *Tumbling Tumbleweeds*, co-starring Autry, Smiley Burnette, and Gabby Hayes, made Autry famous—and his 1939 hit recording of "Back in the Saddle Again" gave him a signature song to go with his newfound fame. By 1942, he had been voted the top Western movie star for seven years in a row and was among the Top 10 box office draws. (In his best year, 1940, he finished fourth, behind Mickey Rooney, Spencer Tracy, and Clark Gable.)

The singing cowboy became so popular that a small town outside Ardmore, Oklahoma, where Autry owned a 1,200-acre ranch, decided to change its name to Gene Autry. An estimated 35,000 visitors overwhelmed the tiny town and its 227 citizens as they flooded in for the 1941 naming ceremony, broadcast live on Autry's popular CBS Sunday radio show *Melody Ranch*.

Yates didn't want to lose his cash cowboy. So, as war approached, he offered to get Autry a deferment from military service. Autry wouldn't hear of it. "For me to ask for a deferment, it would reflect very badly on my behalf, and on yours, too," Autry later said he'd told Yates. "There's a lot of kids out there on the farm and working in the coal mines, and they're drafting them, and a lot of those parents are going to say, 'How does Gene Autry stay out when my boy is going in?' I didn't want that."

"I think the He-men in the movies belong in the Army, Marine, Navy or Air Corps," Autry said at the time. "All of these He-men realize that right now is the time to get into the service. Every movie cowboy ought to devote time to the Army winning, or to helping win, until the war is over—the same as any other American citizen. The Army needs all the young men it can get, and if I can set a good example for the young men, I'll be mighty proud."

Before he left for the army, Autry squeezed in a few more recording sessions, plus another five movies for Republic. The last

COURTESY AUTRY QUALIFIED INTEREST TRUST & THE AUTRY FOUNDATION

OPPOSITE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Opposite: Cowboy singer and actor Gene Autry becomes Technical Sergeant Autry, US Army Air Forces, during a live broadcast of his radio show from Chicago on July 26, 1942. Lieutenant Colonel Edward Shaifer administers the oath. Above: Autry soon traded his cowboy suits for khaki, and started using his fame to raise war-winning Stateside morale. Here, he appears in uniform on the cover of a 1943 songbook.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

of the movies, *Bells of Capistrano*, cost $500,000, much more than the usual Autry film, because two camera crews were used to ensure shooting would be finished before the star left for the army.

In early May, while in Washington, DC, for a rodeo, Autry passed his army physical. He officially enlisted while in Chicago for another rodeo at the beginning of July 1942. At the end of that month, Lieutenant Colonel Edward Shaifer inducted him into the US Army Air Forces as a technical sergeant during a live radio broadcast. Autry had earned more than half a million dollars in 1941. Now he would make $114 a month. On the positive side, legend has it, he would have the honor of being the only GI permitted to wear cowboy boots with his uniform (on occasion).

AFTER BASIC TRAINING, Autry was assigned to Luke Field in Phoenix, where his squadron leader was a local captain named Barry Goldwater, the future Republican senator and presidential candidate. Luke, the army air forces' main wartime training center, graduated more than 12,000 fighter pilots, but the military wanted Autry to be an entertainer, not a flyboy. He toured the nation with a trio and his fiddle player, Carl Cotner, who also was stationed at Luke. They performed for soldiers daily and continued Autry's Sunday radio show, now called *Sergeant Gene Autry*, for another year.

"I had mixed feelings about doing camp shows," Autry later wrote. "It was soft duty. For the cut in pay I had taken, I felt I was entitled at least to get shot at." He dreamed of becoming a military pilot. "I was hooked on those clouds," he wrote.

To turn his dream into reality, Autry had to find a way to get more flying time, and experience with more powerful engines. So, he bought his own plane—and then his own airport, complete with a training school. In June 1944, he earned his wings. Promoted to the non-commissioned pilot rank of flight officer, Autry was assigned to the 91st Ferrying Squadron of the 555th Army Air Base Unit at Love Field in Dallas, part of the US Army Air Forces' Air Transport Command. "Among fliers, the [transport command] wasn't where the glamour was," he wrote. "The fellows who flew the fighters and the bombers sometimes compared us to truck drivers." There was some glamour in songwrit-

Gene Autry gets his wings by Richard Sassaman

ing, however, and during his stay at Love Field, Autry was inspired to write "At Mail Call Today," which spent more than five months on the country charts in 1945.

Air transports were not the only planes Autry got to fly. He piloted the P-51 Mustang fighter, the SBD Dauntless dive bomber, and the C-47 Skytrain transport, "but for the thrill that lasts a lifetime," he wrote, "nothing could beat the C-109. It had been converted [from a B-24 bomber] into a tanker to haul fuel over the [Himalayas] and into Kunming, China." Of his adventures in the China-Burma-India Theater, Autry wrote, "I only flew the Hump [pilot slang for the Himalayas] once and that was enough."

The most hazardous mission of Autry's military career wasn't the flight over the Hump, but one from Canada to the Azores islands in the North Atlantic in September 1944. The plane he was co-piloting had to reverse course to avoid a typhoon. The crew had to fly five hours back to Newfoundland, where it landed at Gander Bay low on fuel and with one engine out. "Then a fog bank rolled in and we were stuck there for two weeks," he recalled.

COURTESY OF AUTRY QUALIFIED INTEREST TRUST & THE AUTRY FOUNDATION

Flight Officer Autry was never stuck anywhere for long, however. "Have been practically around the world...and in so many countries that if I had to have a passport for each of them it would fill a book," read a message he wrote for the November issue of his fan magazine, *Autry's Aces*. "I wish I could share the experiences I have with you but at the present time the War Department says 'no telling' where I have been or what is going on."

In June 1945, Autry received an honorable discharge from the army and moved over to special services to head a USO (United Service Organizations) troupe. In his new role, he traveled 35,000 miles in the South Pacific to perform 85 shows. "We never had less than 3,500 in the audience and a lot of times we played to an entire division of 15,000 men in a day," he later said. "Everywhere we went the first thing the boys said was, 'Where's your horse?'" On Guam, he did ride a water buffalo.

Autry was close to a lot of groundbreaking history at the war's end. He was on Tinian in the Marianas on August 6, 1944, two days before the B-29 *Enola Gay* took off from the island's North Field to drop an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Three days later he was still in the Marianas, on Saipan, when the second atomic bomb was dropped, on Nagasaki. Then, on the 14th, he was on the Japanese island of Iwo Jima when President Harry Truman announced Japan's surrender.

RETURNING HOME AT THE BEGINNING of September 1945, Autry was surprised to find that the biggest stars in the country, such as Bing Crosby and John Wayne, had stayed out of the military. He also learned that Herb Yates had made good on his threat to concentrate on the career of Roy Rogers if Autry entered the army. Rogers was now the biggest cowboy star in the world.

Autry never regained the top singing cowboy actor spot. But

COURTESY OF AUTRY QUALIFIED INTEREST TRUST & THE AUTRY FOUNDATION

over the next eight years he did make almost 40 more movies, and moved to television. In 1950, he formed his own production company, Flying A Productions, for the purpose of creating and producing his own program. *The Gene Autry Show* lasted for five seasons, with 91 episodes.

At the same time, Autry shifted his musical career away from an exclusively country and western repertoire and recorded some enormously successful Christmas songs, including "Frosty the Snowman," "Here Comes Santa Claus," and the number-one hit "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." Autry made 640 records in all, writing or co-writing almost half the songs they contained.

Endorsements for a wide variety of products and profitable real estate and business investments, including TV and radio stations,

Opposite: At New York's Mitchel Field in June 1943, Autry (center) greets the pilot and copilot of *Mary Ann*, a B-17 featured in the movie *Air Force*. Autry yearned to be a military pilot. Above, left: The military, however, wanted him to be safe, make music for GIs (above), and keep doing his weekly *Melody Ranch* radio show—eventually rechristened *Sergeant Gene Autry*. So, Autry learned to fly on his own. Above, right: Earning pilot's wings took Autry to exotic places like India and China. After finishing his hitch as a military pilot, he was content to return to his musical cowboy role, traveling to entertain the troops. Here, somewhere in the South Pacific, cowboy meets water buffalo.

Pilots with Stripes

In August 1941, as US involvement in the global war became more likely, the US Army Air Forces was short on pilots. At that time, pilots had to be officers, however, and training officers took time. So, the army air forces revived a mothballed program that gave enlisted men the opportunity to take the same flight training as officers and graduate as staff sergeant pilots.

Over the next 16 months, almost 2,600 men became enlisted pilots, flying as staff or technical sergeants or flight officers (a non-commissioned rank equivalent to warrant officer). More than 200 of those enlisted pilots, like Gene Autry, flew combat missions overseas. Four later became generals, and four staff sergeants and one technical sergeant got the Medal of Honor for flying bombing runs over France, Germany, or Japan.

Another group of WWII enlisted fliers was the liaison pilots. Many of these had flown solo as army air forces cadets, but hadn't made it all the way through flight training. After 60 hours of additional flying time that concentrated on short field landings, low-altitude navigation, and takeoffs over obstacles, the pilots were graduated. They flew in single-engine light planes based on civilian models, and missions included medical evacuation, supply delivery, personnel transport, intelligence photography, and reconnaissance. The planes were flying ducks in combat zones, moving slowly, close to the ground, and unprotected by armor or guns.

In the earliest days of the enlisted pilot program, there was much fuss over whether these men should wear pilot's wings. The verdict was that they should. The liaison pilots got their own form of the wings badge, with an L emblazoned on the shield in the middle. As the story goes, a group of sergeants in New Mexico, wearing their liaison wings, was stopped by military police and accused of impersonating officers. "You mean to tell me you fly airplanes just like second lieutenants?" an MP asked. One of the pilots is said to have replied, "No sir. We fly them better."

The first enlisted pilot in US history had been trained 30 years earlier, almost in secret, at an army flying school in the Philippines. Lieutenant Frank Lahm ran the school. Having become America's first certified military pilot in 1909, he ultimately earned three different flying licenses: balloon, dirigible, and plane. Lahm wanted to train pilots at his school, but not enough candidates were interested. Then a corporal named Vernon Burge, who worked with Lahm as a mechanic, volunteered in early 1912. Four months later, Burge became an enlisted pilot before anyone back in the States really knew what was going on.

The War Department wasn't particularly happy when it found out about Burge. It sent Lahm a letter pointing out that "very few enlisted men are qualified to observe military operations and render accurate and intelligent reports of what they see from an aeroplane... [or] have sufficient knowledge of mechanics to appreciate the stresses to which an aeroplane is subjected during certain maneuvers."

Despite these protests, when World War I began a few years later, the army had 20 enlisted pilots and soon added 60 more. Those men mostly ferried airplanes from factories in France to the front lines. Between the world wars, more than 250 served. Enlisted pilot training was halted during the Great Depression. Congress restarted the program in the middle of 1941. Before that, a trainee needed to have completed at least two years in college and be at least 21 years old; afterward, a cadet could be as young as 18, and the only academic requirement was that he had graduated in the upper half of his high school class. The program ended in November 1942, because of squabbles over the difference in pay between sergeant and officer pilots, who were doing the same job, and because the army air forces lowered its education requirement for cadets to any high school diploma. After that, future flight-training graduates would automatically become flight officers or second lieutenants.

Autry wore pilot's wings, but he wasn't an officer. He held the enlisted rank of flight officer, signified by a round-ended blue bar rimmed with gold and bisected laterally by a gold stripe. The insignia is visible near the end of Autry's epaulette.

So, what about that War Department protest that enlisted men had insufficient knowledge of mechanics? Two of the earliest enlisted pilots were William Ocker, who more or less invented instrument flying, and Walter Beech, who later worked with aircraft pioneer Clyde Cessna and then founded his own Beech Aircraft Company. One of the WWII enlisted pilots was future Formula One champion driver Carroll Shelby, who would design sports cars such as the AC Cobra, the Mustang GT350, and the Dodge Viper.

And insufficient appreciation of stresses? One of the last enlisted pilots was Charles Elwood "Chuck" Yeager, an aircraft mechanic who, with the rank of flight officer, went on to fly P-51 Mustangs in England. A couple of years after World War II, in October 1947, Yeager was a test pilot and flew a somewhat faster airplane, the X-1, at a speed faster than Mach 1, breaking the sound barrier.

The final year of World War II saw the retirement of the first-ever enlisted pilot. Vernon Burge was a colonel by that time, with 38 years in the service. The last enlisted pilot was Master Sergeant George Rafferty, who had become a pilot in 1921, served as a lieutenant colonel during World War II, and put away his wings in May 1957. By choice, he reverted afterward to his enlisted rank.

—*Richard Sassaman*

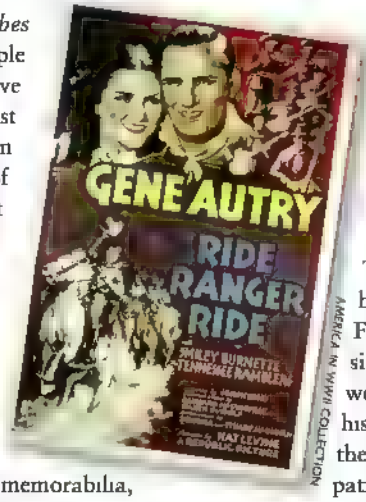
Gene Autry gets his wings by Richard Sassaman

COURTESY OF AUTRY QUALIFIED INTEREST TRUST & THE AUTRY FOUNDATION

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Above, left: A cowboy at heart, Autry always planned to go back to his music and film career after serving his country. But his service cost him. Below: When he left for war, Autry was king of the cowboys, with a string of hit films such as 1936's *Ride Ranger Ride*. While he was away, Republic Pictures gave top billing to Roy Rogers, who did not go to war. Above, right: Autry's career was far from over, though. Being the only flying, singing cowboy in uniform was good publicity. So was his habit of wearing cowboy boots with his uniform when not on duty.

added to Autry's wealth. For eight years, *Forbes* magazine listed him as one of the 400 richest people in America. In 1960, Autry got a chance to improve his finances by acquiring the rights to broadcast games of California's new expansion American League team. He attended the annual meeting of Major League Baseball owners, but the broadcast deal fell through. So, he bought the team, naming it the Los Angeles Angels. In 1982 the team, then known as the California Angels (now the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim), retired the number 26 in his honor, calling him "the 26th man" on its 25 man roster.



AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

OVER HIS YEARS in entertainment and the military, Autry built up a solid collection of memorabilia, and in 1988 he built the Gene Autry Western Heritage Museum to house it. Now called the Museum of the American West, it's part of the Autry National Center in Los Angeles' Griffith Park, a collection of more than half a million items of Western art and memorabilia.

Autry had accumulated plenty of honors, too, by his late years. He was inducted into many national halls of fame, including those for broadcasters, country music, cowboys, Nashville songwriters, and radio. In 2010, he was one of four Cowboys of the Silver Screen—with Tom Mix, William S. Hart, and Roy Rogers—honored on stamps issued by the US Postal Service.

After more than 70 years in the entertainment industry, Autry died at age 91 in October 1998. Today, he remains the only entertainer in history honored with five stars on Hollywood's Walk of Fame, one each for movies, radio, records, television, and live performances (which, in Autry's case, were at rodeos rather than theaters). The marker on his grave in Los Angeles' Forest Lawn Cemetery lists these attributes: "American hero, philanthropist, patriot and veteran, movie star, singer, composer, baseball fan and owner, 33rd degree Mason, media entrepreneur, loving husband, gentleman." Not a bad epitaph. ★

RICHARD SASSAMAN, *a frequent contributor to* America in WWII, *has ridden a horse only once in his life, and it probably will be some time, if ever, before he's back in the saddle again.*

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII*, AUGUST 2011

Marlene Dietrich, Voice of the OSS

To the CIA's forerunner—the Office of Strategic Services—the German-born star with the sultry voice was a weapon aimed at Hitler's boys in uniform.

by John E. Stanchak

IT'S A SCENE IN MANY AMERICAN WWII MOVIES. During a break in the fighting, weary marines in a tropical backwater play around with a radio until they pick up sounds of American music. It's a sad ballad. Then a woman's voice comes on the air: "Hello Joe. Are you lonely? Do you wonder if your girl back home still misses you? Do you worry about how your family is getting along without you?" At that point, some agitated leatherneck growls at the radio and demands that his fellow grunts turn off Tokyo Rose.

This tired movie scene is based on bit of real wartime life. American women—Tokyo Rose in the Pacific and Axis Sally in Europe—broadcast Japanese and Nazi propaganda over the radio to US servicemen stationed overseas. They reported Allied losses, rumors of trouble back in the States, stories about faithless wives and struggling mothers, all mixed in with the popular music servicemen missed. The motive? To chip away at the American fighting man's will to carry on, to make him homesick, and to erode his faith in his government.

US War Department eggheads termed these manipulative broadcasts psychological warfare; old soldiers called them morale operations, or MOs. But two could play at this dark game, and in the European theater, America had a knock-'em-dead answer to Axis Sally. It was international film star Marlene Dietrich—Lili Marlene, as she styled herself to the German servicemen who tuned in her propaganda broadcasts. The Americans could not have made a better pick.

There was more than one reason why the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the US War Department's covert action arm during the war, chose Dietrich to be the voice of its assault on Axis military morale. She was not only a popular movie beauty, but also a native German-speaker and a longtime opponent of Adolf Hitler and Nazism. The OSS also knew she was motivated by a threat she did not dare discuss in public.

Marlene Dietrich, Voice of the [illegible]

by John E. Stanchak

Baptized Marie Magdalene Dietrich, the future movie icon was born in late 1901 outside Berlin, the younger of two daughters. Her father was a German police lieutenant, and her mother an heir of a famous jewelry firm. When Dietrich was a young girl, her father died in a riding accident. Her mother eventually married an officer in the Kaiser's army, but he died of wounds in World War I. The collapse of the German government and economy in the days after the 1918 armistice left the family destitute.

Dietrich claimed never to have liked her name; she thought it was too common. So in her teens she reinvented herself as Marlene Dietrich, a serious student of violin intent on a career in classical music. But not long after the armistice, she badly injured her left wrist. She had no future as a professional violinist. Instead, to help her mother and sister survive in the financial chaos, she labored as a seamstress. Then, stepping out on some famously pretty legs, she found work in theaters as a chorus girl.

Film production was one of the few businesses that thrived in post-WWI Germany. When moviemakers discovered Dietrich in 1922, their futures rose together with hers. It was the age of silent movies, when the players' voices weren't important, but their looks and physicality were. Such things translated into every language, and German actors and films became popular all over Europe and in America. Trading on blond curls and a sensual presence, Dietrich was a movie beauty who slowly built an international following.

In 1924, Dietrich married assistant film director Rudolf Sieber. On paper, the union lasted all of Sieber's life (he died in 1976). But Dietrich developed a broad view of marriage—one that didn't include hanging around with Sieber or their only child, Maria, very often.

Dietrich's success in silent pictures grew until 1929, when she met movie auteur Josef von Sternberg. He cast her in 1930's hit film *The Blue Angel*, an early talking picture. It was intended as a star vehicle for the mature, popular, and serious German actor Emil Jannings. But Dietrich stole the show as Lola Lola, a sensual but cruel cabaret singer who turns a respected schoolmaster (Jannings) into her love slave. The schoolmaster ends up disgraced because of his public obsession with her. The theme was shockingly adult oriented for its time.

The movie, von Sternberg, Dietrich, and Dietrich's sultry rendition of "Falling in Love Again" were all celebrated in the United States. The director and his sexy star made an immediate trip to Hollywood to cash in. Paramount pictures signed both of them, and together they made the 1930 hit *Morocco* with male heartthrob Gary Cooper. In this picture Dietrich performed a cabaret act wearing a man's tuxedo and top hat and gained notoriety for a scene in which she kissed another woman on the mouth. The film earned Dietrich her only Academy Award nomination and prompted more highly sexed collaborations with von Sternberg; some of the best remembered are *Shanghai Express* (1932), *The Scarlet Empress* (1934), and *The Devil is a Woman* (1935). Dietrich admitted to newsmen that she was a little startled by naive, easily titillated American movie audiences. "Sex," she remarked. "In America an obsession. In other parts of the world, a fact."

There were other movies and other directors, but after the mid-1930s some of the public enthusiasm for Dietrich cooled. She traveled in Western Europe (though not Germany) and had a number of affairs with prominent lovers, among them American movie star Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. It was during this period that politics first seriously entered Dietrich's life—and complicated it.

DOCTORMACRO.INFO

Dietrich told the story to author Charlotte Chandler. In her last years, the actress cooperated with Chandler, submitting to hours of audio-taped interviews about her life and career. In the book that came out of these sessions, *Marlene: A Personal Biography*, Chandler recalls visiting Dietrich's apartment and noticing a family picture with someone torn out of it. When pressed, Dietrich admitted that it was her sister, Liesel. She explained how she purposely had no contact with her mother, her sister, or any of her family from the time Adolf Hitler assumed control of Germany until the end of World War II, sending not so much as one letter.

Reich Minister Joseph Goebbels, chief of all media in Nazi Germany, began sending messages to Dietrich in the '30s, offering privileges and opportunities in the Fatherland if she returned. The star politely declined, thinking the matter settled. Then, while vacationing in Switzerland, she met author Erich Maria Remarque, internationally famous for his antiwar novel *All Quiet on the Western Front*. He told her how he had fled his native Germany in the middle of the night after a telephone call warned him the Gestapo was on its way to seize him. A vocal opponent of Nazism, he knew he was on the Nazis' list of hated dissenters, but thought his international literary prominence would protect him. In Switzerland he learned that after his escape, the Gestapo, angry and vindictive, had arrested his sister and tortured her to death. He was nearly disabled by grief and guilt.

Dietrich was appalled. She began speaking out against the Nazis—in social settings, but not in print. Former lover Fairbanks told biographer Chandler that one night during this period, in a Paris hotel, Dietrich spoke seriously about plotting to kill Hitler,

PREVIOUS SPREAD: DOCTORMACRO.INFO

Above, top: After a successful decade in silent films, Marlene Dietrich broke into talkies in 1930 with *The Blue Angel*, filmed in her native Germany. Previous spread: She fast became famous for the sultry look she shows off here in Paramount's *Desire*. Above, bottom: Dietrich was one of the hottest actresses in Hollywood by the time she graced the cover of the November 1937 issue of *Screen Book*.

With Munich in Allied hands in the spring of 1945, Dietrich poses with a US armored vehicle at the city's Hotel Bayerischer Hof. One of Europe's grand hotels, the Bayerischer Hof was hammered by Allied bombing in April 1944. It would be rebuilt to surpass its former glory.

something she believed she might be able to carry off on her own. After hours of heated talk, Fairbanks dissuaded her. But she was not about to keep quiet about her hatred of the Nazis.

RETURNING TO HOLLYWOOD, Dietrich soon began receiving messages from the German government again. Some implied that if she did not return to Germany, bad things could happen to loved ones there.

On Hollywood movie lots, Dietrich encountered growing numbers of German refugees among the film crews and technical staffs. To her surprise, she discovered that movie tough guy actor George Raft and saucy comedienne Mae West spoke German; both were children of German immigrant mothers and were sympathetic to Dietrich's plight. Some of Dietrich's friends urged her to voice her opinions publicly, but that wasn't something movie studios had ever tolerated. So when journalists asked for a comment on events in Germany, she dismissed the matter by saying "Hitler is an idiot."

In 1937, Dietrich took a bold step: she became a naturalized American citizen. "The Germans and I no longer speak the same language," she told the press. It was a gutsy move, and Dietrich made it with trepidation. She told Chandler, "After I made it clear to the Nazis that I would not return to Germany, and I became a US citizen, denouncing the Nazis and working toward their defeat, I feared for the safety of my sister. I could not be in contact with my mother and sister, so I tore Liesel out of my picture frame and tried to tear out her very existence. I was afraid the Nazis could punish her—retribution, revenge, you know."

The eruption of war in Europe came just as a career breakthrough put Dietrich in the spotlight. In 1939's popular Western *Destry Rides Again*, she starred alongside all-American guy Jimmy Stewart and made a hit out of the film's rousing song "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have," by Frank Loesser. Dietrich used the moment to make clear where she stood on the matter of Nazi Germany. The actress's support for Germany's opponents was solid, vocal, and public. She wasn't emotionally conflicted, she told

ABOVE: COURTESY OF MARK A. CLARK. FILMNOIR.PHOTOS.BLOGSPOT.COM

HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION/CORBIS

Dietrich spent stretches of the war traveling through Europe with the USO to entertain troops. Above: She signs autographs for the boys in Germany in 1945. Below: She poses with a sign announcing her appearance in camp.

reporters. "The tears I have cried over Germany have dried. I have washed my face." When the United States entered the war, she became a war bond hawker and a USO performer, entertaining at training camps and troop depots across the country. Around this time, she heard from the OSS for the first time

Once the United States joined the war and poured its forces into the South Pacific and North Africa, American servicemen were exposed to enemy psychological warfare broadcasts, radio programming that tried to provoke discontent in the troops and bruise them emotionally. The Japanese and German efforts were corny and ineffective, but OSS strategists believed American commercial broadcasters could improve on the concept. They took up the radio as a weapon.

It took months to get the campaign going, but in the spring of 1943, the OSS launched its first radio morale operation during the fighting in and around Italy. An MO campaign meant to demoralize Germans fighting guerrillas in Greece and Yugoslavia was also run out of a station set up in neutral Turkey. Later, a sophisticated operation was established in Woburn, Britain. Named *Soldatensender* Calais (Soldiers Radio Calais) originally and then *Soldatensender*

There's Always a Killjoy

NOT EVERY AMERICAN cared for Dietrich's show for the troops at the front. A letter to her dated April 18, 1945, from USO headquarters in New York City, read:

I have a letter from Mr. Philipps in New York drawing attention to an article which appeared in "Life Magazine" saying "Dietrich entices a GI to the stage and in doing a telepathy act she reads the soldier's mind, and then cracks 'Oh, think of something else. I can't talk about that.' This article brought criticism from various church papers and I have been told to ask you to eliminate this line from your act. He has also received a clipping showing you making an entrance on the stage by thrusting only your leg through a curtain and some remark about a "seduction act" boy, are we ripe for some of that!" and says that if this is as bad as it sounds it should also be eliminated

COURTESY OF MARK A. CLARK, FILMNOIRPHOTOS.BLOGSPOT.COM

Marlene Dietrich, Voice of the OSS

by John E. Stanchak

West, it employed musicians, entertainers, and news writers who broadcast to German troops on the Continent.

Years after the war, the institutional descendant of the OSS, the Central Intelligence Agency, produced a brief declassified history of the 1940s radio war. The report laid out how Madison Avenue and Hollywood got in on the MO campaign:

By April 1944 [the Woburn broadcasts] had expanded to the point that they lacked the personnel to produce the quality entertainment thought necessary to hold an audience. MO therefore agreed to produce entertainment in an operation codenamed the Muzac Project. MO recruited Hollywood writers, an eight-piece orchestra, and big-name talent such as Marlene Dietrich. The branch opened a music department in New York City, used the services of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency, and wrote and recorded [propaganda] lyrics for 312 German and American songs as well as specially written pieces. A typical twelve-hour broadcast day included news from the fronts, air-raid warnings and bomb damage reports, POW political commentaries, and German domestic news.

The OSS knew it had something in recruiting Dietrich. She could really talk to homesick German soldiers, pull their strings. To them, she was Lili Marlene, named for the title character of a haunting song loved by Axis and Allied troops alike. Based on a WWI era lyric, "Lili Marlene" told of a brokenhearted girl waiting by a barracks gate, pining for her soldier sweetheart. The song's melancholy power had become apparent back in 1941, as British and German armies battled in North Africa. Each side had tried to jam the other's radio broadcasts, and in the process, each had stumbled upon the other's entertainment programming. Both sides sniffled and teared up over the song as performed in German by a whiskey-voiced singer, perhaps Marlene Dietrich.

Calling herself Lili Marlene allowed Dietrich to tap into the German soldiers' deep longing for home, normal life, and loved ones left behind. The OSS radiomen broadcast a tailor-made Dietrich rendition of the namesake song, along with other Dietrich recordings, such as "See What the Boys in the Back Room Will Have" and "Falling in Love Again." The MO men also had Dietrich deliver persuasive messages to German troops in a manner more polished than Axis Sally or Tokyo Rose could ever have managed.

As the war went on, Dietrich did less work for Hollywood and more for the war effort. She made only one movie in 1944, *Kismet*, a Technicolor fantasy of old Baghdad. From then until the German surrender, she would be with US troops, touring with the USO in North Africa, Italy, Britain, France, Belgium, and on into Germany. To everyone's delight, the over 40 trouper was a huge hit with America's young servicemen. Wearing gold high heels and a high-necked, form-fitting, full length gown covered in sequins, she danced, she vamped, she played her old violin, and she cracked up the boys with something she'd learned in variety theater in Germany before many of them were born: bowing melodies on a saw.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

In Italy Dietrich looks over short snorters—money signed by military units and kept as souvenirs—with Irving Berlin, writer of the wartime hits "God Bless America" and "White Christmas."

SHE WON THE BOYS OVER time and again, using lines that had worked for her in troop shows back in the United States and in the North African desert: "Hello boys.... I'm probably the only girl in the world tonight who has a date with 18,000 men. This is the first time in my life I ever stayed awake all night and rode 30 miles just to keep a date. But then it's also the first time I ever had 18,000 men together in one place."

In France, Dietrich stayed very close to the front, traveling for a bit with paratroop general James Gavin and his men and with Major General George Patton. There, on a few occasions, she met with and interviewed German POWs. A few of the interviews are believed to have been audio-recorded and played on MO radio. After that, it was back to touring.

As the war wound down in Europe, Dietrich was quoted as saying "There's something about an American soldier you can't explain. They're so grateful for anything, even a film actress coming to see them." Dietrich's work to build GIs' morale—and to wreck that of Germany's soldiers—wasn't forgotten. In September 1945, through the efforts of common troops and indebted OSS operatives, the movie star was reunited with her mother, plucked out of millions of displaced persons in Germany. The reunion came just in time: the elderly widow died weeks later.

Visiting conquered Berlin, Dietrich discovered she wasn't *everyone's* favorite. Many German survivors thought she was a traitor to her native countrymen and turned their backs on her. When asked why she had done all she had for US troops and the Allied cause, she answered "*aus Anstand*" ("out of decency"). She took that as her reward, but her adopted country wanted her to have more than that. In 1947, for her work on behalf of the nation during conflict, President Harry Truman awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom. ☆

JOHN E. STANCHAK *is a Philadelphia-based writer and editor and a frequent contributor to* America in WWII.

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THE real DEAL

Whether they were stars before, during, or after the war, these and many other actors wore real military uniforms—not just costumes from studio wardrobes—during World War II.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

CESAR ROMERO

Cesar Julio Romero, Jr., works aboard USS *Cavalier (APA-37)*, which carried troops and landing craft on amphibious assaults. Romero was already a star when he joined the coast guard in October 1942. In November 1943 he boarded *Cavalier*, serving in the Pacific invasions of Saipan (June 1944) and Tinian (July 1944). Romero charmed his way across movie and TV screens through the '90s, most famous as *Batman*'s Joker in the '60s.

US NAVY

HENRY FONDA

"I don't want to be in a fake war in a studio." With those words, Henry Fonda left Hollywood in August 1942 to join the navy. He was 37 years old, married with two children, some college under his belt, a stage career, and movie stardom. But Fonda chose basic enlistment. After serving as a quartermaster third class aboard the destroyer USS *Satterlee (DD-626)*, he accepted a commission as lieutenant junior grade to serve in naval intelligence in the Central Pacific. This photo was taken there in July 1945 aboard USS *Bearss (DD 654)* At war's end, Fonda, wearing a Bronze Star, returned to a career that would include more than 100 roles.

US NAVY

ROBERT TAYLOR

Before the war, love of aviation inspired MGM leading man Robert Taylor—born Spangler Arlington Brugh—to get a pilot's license. When war broke out, he wanted to fly for the navy. He completed navy pilot training (above) in 1943 and became a lieutenant in the US Naval Reserve. But there would be no combat; at age 32, Taylor was too old! So, he settled for training pilots at California's Naval Air Station Livermore. He also made flight instruction films and narrated 1944's documentary *The Fighting Lady*, about the carrier USS *Yorktown (CV-10)*. After the war, Taylor went back to acting, but smoking claimed his life at age 57.

US NAVY

TONY CURTIS

Tony Curtis wasn't an actor when he joined the navy in September 1943—nor was he Tony Curtis. He was Bernard Schwartz of the Bronx, son of Hungarian Jewish immigrants. Serving in the Pacific aboard submarine tender USS *Proteus (AS-19)*, he was a mile away when the Japanese surrendered aboard USS *Missouri (BB-63)* in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945. That December, Schwartz headed home to study acting on the GI Bill at City University of New York. By 1948 he was Tony Curtis of Universal Pictures.

US NAVY

WAYNE MORRIS

Bert De Wayne Morris, Jr.—Wayne Morris—was a WWII ace. A 1940 role in *Flight Angels* led him to learn to fly. In 1942 he joined the navy, passing flight school. Too big for fighters, he flew anyway in brother-in law (and soon top navy ace) David McCampbell's Hellcat squadron aboard USS *Essex (CV-9)*, downing seven Japanese planes and helping sink five ships. He wore four Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Air Medals. Back from war, he was relegated to B Westerns. He died while visiting an aircraft carrier in 1959.

US ARMY

JACKIE COOGAN

John Leslie "Jackie" Coogan led an intense young life. He was a child star in Charlie Chaplin's 1921 *The Kid*, 1922's *Oliver Twist*, and more. He survived a car crash that killed his dad and a friend. He sued his mother and stepfather, who pocketed his earnings. On Pearl Harbor day, Coogan was in the army. He had a pilot's license, so he moved to the Army Air Forces as a glider pilot. In India with the 1st Air Commando Group, he flew Chindit commandos into Burma. When Coogan came home he acted for TV, most notably as the *Addams Family*'s Uncle Fester in the '60s.

AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

BRIAN KEITH

Acting was in Robert Keith Richey's blood. His parents were actors. He was in a movie at three, and played on stage and radio as a youth. But after he finished school in East Rockaway, New York, Germany invaded Poland. By 1942, he was in the global war as a marine (above, as sergeant). Richey served in the Pacific as a rear gunner aboard SBD Dauntless dive bombers in a scout bomber squadron, receiving the Air Medal. Heading home, he became Brian Keith, bringing his smooth style and gruff voice to projects such as *The Parent Trap* (1961) and TV's *Family Affair* (1966–71).

WARNER BROS PHOTO AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

RONALD REAGAN

Before he became president or California governor, Ronald Reagan was an actor. Before that, he was a soldier. When America entered the war, he was already the Gipper, thanks to 1940's *Knute Rockne—All American*. He was also a reserve second lieutenant in the 323rd Cavalry. Undertaking home study in 1935, Reagan was commissioned in 1937. In April 1942 he was called to active duty—stateside because of poor vision. He moved to the Army Air Forces and made about 400 training and promotional films by war's end. Leaving active duty in December 1945 as a captain, he returned to acting and political activity, running for governor in 1966.

US NAVY

GENE KELLY

Eugene Curran Kelly had come to Hollywood only temporarily, to make a movie for MGM. Then he was heading back to Broadway—so he thought. He did leave Hollywood briefly during World War II, but not for the Great White Way. In late 1944, he joined the navy as a lieutenant junior grade, and took his talents to the Anacostia neighborhood of Washington, DC, to the US Naval Photographic Center. There, he worked making documentary films for the navy, writing, directing, and appearing on camera. When the war ended, he returned, not to Broadway, but to Tinsel Town, to star in musical films with spectacular dance numbers.

PBS.ORG

MEL BROOKS

Melvin Kaminsky of Brooklyn was smart. Joining the army in 1944 after high school, he was sent for special training at Virginia Military Institute. But the program was axed and he landed in boot camp. In Europe with the 1104th Engineer Combat Group, he destroyed land mines from Belgium to Germany. Home, he became Mel Brooks, TV comedy writer and more.

US NAVY

EDDIE ALBERT

Edward Albert Heimberger (going by Eddie Albert) toured Mexico with a circus in the '30s, photographing German and Japanese doings for the US Army. In 1942 he joined the navy Made a lieutenant, in November 1943 he used a landing craft to save marines stuck on a reef under fire at Tarawa. Back in civilian life, he dove into acting, focusing on TV.

US MARINE CORPS

BEA ARTHUR

Bernice Frankel—later Bea Arthur—confronts the camera for her 1943 Marine Corps Women's Reserve ID photo. She drove trucks and typed for the corps. At war's end, she studied acting at New York City's Dramatic Workshop of the New School, and stepped onto stage and screen. She would shine in TV comedy, notably as Maude in *Maude*, 1972–1978.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

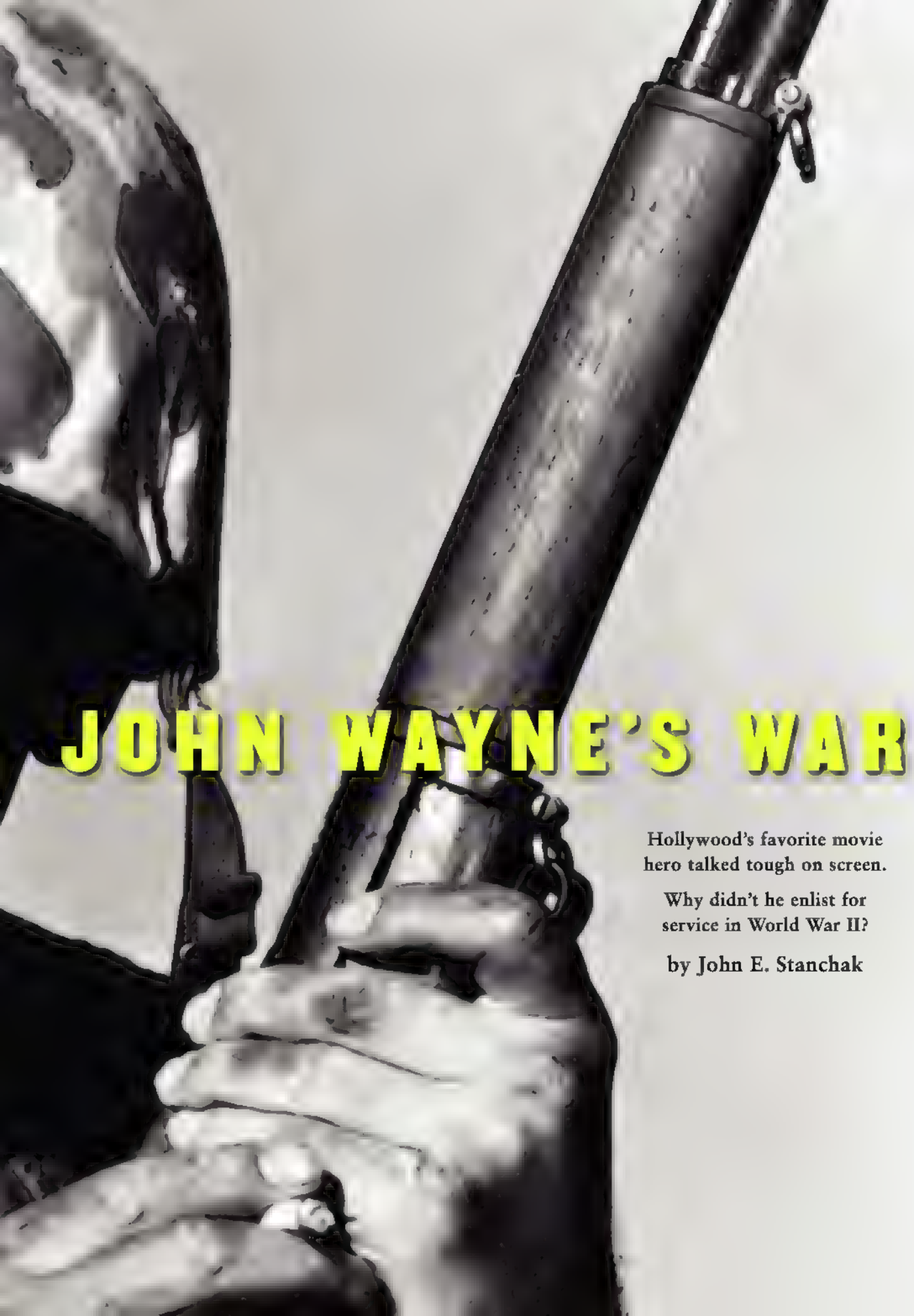
GILBERT ROLAND

Private Gilbert Roland operates a Potomac River ferry at Bolling Army Airfield, Anacostia, Washington, DC, in October 1942. Roland—born in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, and known to his immigrant family as Luis Antonio Dámaso de Alonso—was awaiting an opening at Florida's Miami Beach Training Center, where the US Army Air Forces trained officers for administrative duties, not flying. In Hollywood, Roland (who meant to be a bullfighter like his father) started in silent films in the '20s, made the transition to sound, and continued acting until the early 1980s.

US NAVY

ROBERT MONTGOMERY

Dapper Robert Montgomery prized appearances. In the 1950s he would be an image consultant to Dwight Eisenhower's White House. But during the war, his support went far beyond appearances. Before America joined the fray, he drove ambulances in France. Back in Hollywood after France was lost, he raised money for the Red Cross. And once America went to war, he became a navy officer. He filled office roles in London and stateside, then went aboard the destroyer USS *Barton (DD-722)*, which supported the June 1944 D-Day landings and also served in the Pacific.



JOHN WAYNE'S WAR

Hollywood's favorite movie hero talked tough on screen.

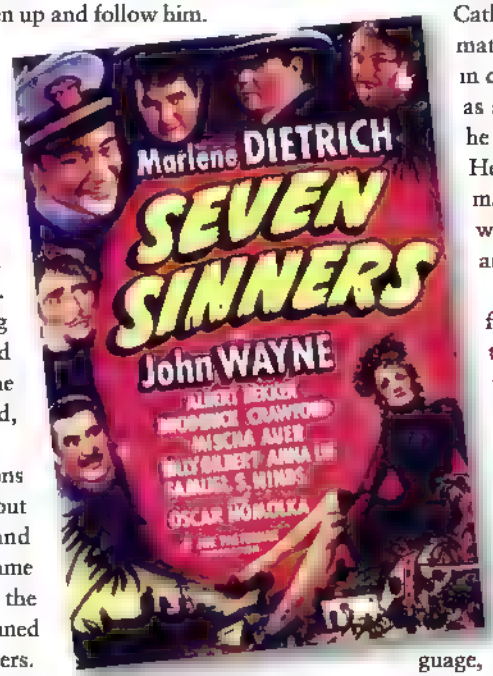
Why didn't he enlist for service in World War II?

by John E. Stanchak

JOHN WAYNE'S WAR

by John E. Stanchak

FOR DECADES, JOHN WAYNE WAS the actor most Americans associated with WWII movies. On the silver screen, he beat the enemy on land, sea, and in the air, all the while bellowing at his men, and at the audience, to toughen up and follow him. The popularity of the pictures he made over a long career helped create his image as the American fighting man who won the war almost single-handedly.



But this favorable impression did not erase a question film fans often asked during the war years: Why didn't John Wayne join the military? He never did put on a real government-issued uniform. He later openly confessed to suffering guilt over this, though he never elaborated on why he did not volunteer. As one of the characters he played on screen said, "Never apologize. Never explain."

The task of pinning down the reasons why Wayne remained a civilian throughout the war was left to biographers and researchers. And what some of them came up with makes sense. At the heart of the issue were business and women: he declined to face down studio chiefs and angry lovers.

In the summer of 1941, Wayne was 34 years old. He had been married to Panamanian beauty Josephine Saenz since 1933 and was father to their four children. He had met Saenz, the daughter of Panama's general consul to the United States, when he was a college student. She was a young woman of considerable poise and dignity who initially turned down his marriage proposals because her father, a pious Roman Catholic, objected to her getting into a love match with a Presbyterian. But Wayne persisted in courting her, and as he started making money as a B movie cowboy, he reached a point where he believed he could support her and a family. Her father never relented in his objection to the marriage, but the young couple went ahead with a civil ceremony in the home of actress and mutual friend Loretta Young.

After years of struggling to convince their families and friends that they were fated to be together, the young couple soon discovered they actually weren't a good match. A polished society woman deeply involved in Roman Catholic Church affairs, Josephine had difficulty explaining her hard-drinking, tough-talking husband and his rowdy companions to visiting bishops and other clergy sipping tea in her living room. Wayne was a man's man who was most comfortable around his buddies, using profane language, sipping tequila, and arguing about football. His closest friends were actor Ward Bond and rodeo champ and stunt man Yakima Canutt, whose favorite pastimes were hunting, fishing, and sports.

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED) COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

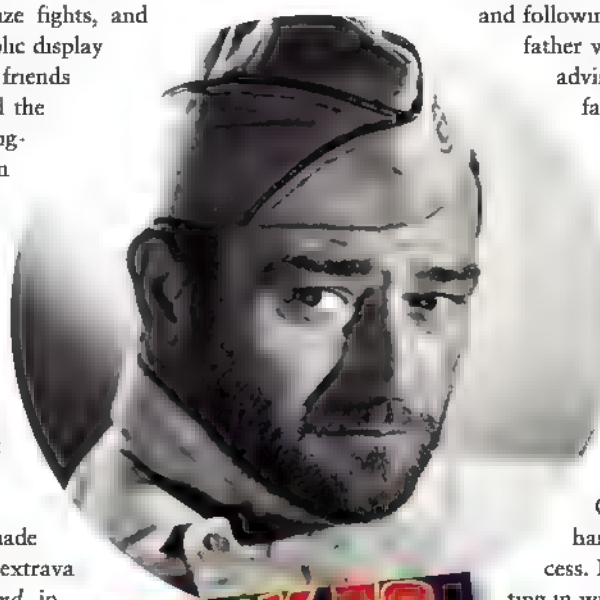
Previous spread: John Wayne certainly looked the part of the fighting GI, right down to squeezing the stub of a cigarette between his fingers in this publicity shot from *Sands of Iwo Jima*. Above, top: In his earlier acting days, Wayne wore a cowboy hat rather than a combat helmet. Here he is dressed for his first lead role, in 1930's *The Big Trail*. Above, bottom: A decade later, he played a navy officer in *Seven Sinners*. Opposite: The set of that film was where the married Wayne got to know actress Marlene Dietrich. An affair developed and lasted until she got bored and dumped him.

JOHN WAYNE'S WAR

by John E. Stanchak

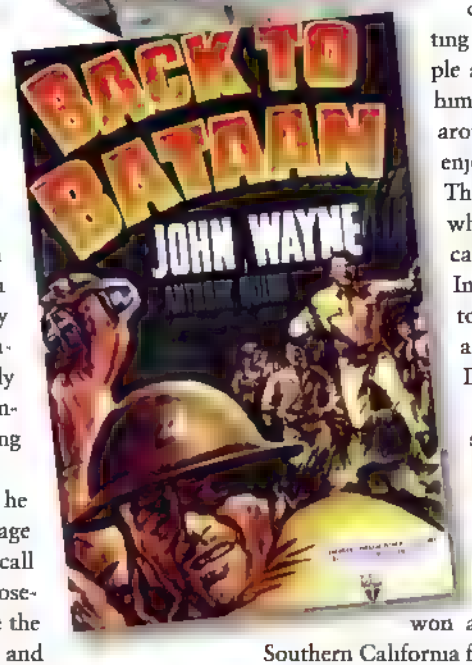
Further complicating matters, Wayne was frequently away from home on movie assignments. He had brief affairs that Josephine overlooked, but she cooled to him. Then in 1940, he costarred in *Seven Sinners* with German sex symbol Marlene Dietrich and began what was for him a torrid affair. Dietrich, a skilled voluptuary, showed Wayne sides of physical love he hadn't imagined, reducing him, she believed, to a puppy to trot around with her to nightclubs, prize fights, and shows. It was an uncomfortable public display that Josephine could not ignore. Her friends advised her to hold firm. They said the Dietrich affair was a passing fancy, suggesting even that she may be a lesbian and that her relationship with Wayne was just a strong friendship.

All were wrong, of course. But none knew about Dietrich's casual nature toward relationships with men. For months Dietrich listened to Wayne complain about his wife and advised him on acting and business affairs. Then, when she got bored, she dumped him.



EMOTIONALLY ADRIFT, Wayne made the Cecil B. DeMille color extravaganza *Reap the Wild Wind* in 1941 with suave top-billed star Ray Milland. As different as the two men were, they struck up a friendship and, after principal photography was completed, took off together for Mexico City on a drinking vacation. There, Milland introduced Wayne to a local called Chata. Something of a film actress and personality in Mexico, Esperanza "Chata" Baur was tastefully described by Milland as "a girl I liked to call upon whenever I was in Mexico City." Wayne instantly went for Chata, who was many years his junior, and he argued with Milland over keeping her to himself.

When Ward Bond eventually weighed in, he described Chata with more colorful language than Milland had used and urged Wayne to call off the romance. Instead, Wayne asked Josephine for a divorce. She refused. Then came the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, and Wayne asked Republic Pictures, which held him to a long-term contract, to release him so he could join the military. The studio refused. Meanwhile, Wayne discovered that Chata's favorite entertainment was drinking to excess, fighting loudly with him, and making scenes in public.



For one of Hollywood's most popular tough guys, this was a genuine crisis, and this period of his life proved emotionally bruising. He may have asked himself how it had all come to this.

The basic facts about Wayne's early life and career are uncomplicated. Born Marion Morrison on May 26, 1907, in Winterset, Iowa, the first child of Mary and Clyde Morrison, Wayne endured an awkward childhood. His parents' marriage was stormy, and following the birth of a son named Robert, his father was diagnosed with a lung ailment and advised to move to a warm, dry climate. The family established a farmstead near the California desert town of Lancaster, which Mary hated and neither of the boys enjoyed. Local children teased the tall and skinny Marion about his name and about the bony nag he rode around town on errands.

The Morrison homestead was a failure. But when Clyde's father died and left him a small legacy, the family sold off the desert property and moved to Glendale, California, then a lightly settled community. Clyde worked in a pharmacy, and Mary harped at him for his lack of financial success. Marion continued to have problems fitting in with local kids, but because of some simple acts of kindness, life suddenly improved for him. A lot of kids like firemen. Marion, who ran around with an Airedale terrier named Duke, enjoyed hanging around the local firehouse. There, he made some influential adult friends who taught him basic boxing skills and started calling him Big Duke and his dog Little Duke. In one sweep, he had learned how to stand up to bullies and got rid of the name that had always got him teased. He would be called Duke ever after.

Young Duke was privileged to attend high school, did well in class and at playing football, and like many others, he learned declamation—memorizing poems, dramatic monologues, and bits of Shakespeare and reciting them on stage. He applied to the US Naval Academy, narrowly failed admission, then won a football scholarship to the University of Southern California for a year. Hollywood myth had it that he lost his scholarship due to injuries, but sports insiders claim it was simpler than that: Duke was not as good as other players and was cut from the team.

These were the peak years of the silent film industry. During school breaks and after leaving USC, Duke found work in

Above, top: Wayne let his whiskers grow for 1945's *Back to Bataan* in which he played a US Army officer leading Filipino guerillas against the Japanese. Above, bottom, and opposite: Promotional posters for Wayne's wartime WWII films played up action, intrigue, heroism, and romance—tried and true box office draws.

THE DUKE'S WAR

John Wayne didn't join the military. But he did spend time in uniform, shooting five combat films during the war.

Flying Tigers (1942)—A fictional adventure built around Colonel Claire Chennault's real-life group of volunteer fighter pilots flying for the Republic of China against the invading Japanese military. The staged air combat is not all that impressive, but as squad leader Captain Jim Gordon, John Wayne does a credible job as the tough-but-fair officer dealing with all the frartious personalities in his command. Except for shots of evil-looking Japanese pilots at their machine guns, there aren't many Asian faces in this story supposedly set in China. The nose art on the Flying Tiger fighters is cool.

Reunion in France (1942)—John Wayne's only on-screen confrontation with the Nazis during the war, and one of only three in his entire career, is set in occupied Paris in 1940. Second-billed to featured star Joan Crawford, who plays a formerly spoiled French aristocrat mortified by her fiancé's open collaboration with the invading Germans, the Duke is an escaped POW sheltered by her. That he gets to call a cruel Nazi officer "bub" and then cold-cocks him is soul-satisfying and makes this picture worth a few minutes of your time on a rainy afternoon. Thin and menacing John Carradine, one of Duke's *Stagecoach* costars, impresses as a relentless Gestapo agent.

The Fighting Seabees (1944)—Called ludicrous by many modern viewers and once mocked on the TV sitcom *Gomer Pyle, USMC*, this feature stars Wayne as civilian construction boss Wedge Donovan. He's buddied up with pot-bellied William Frawley (remembered best as Fred from *I Love Lucy*), grizzled little character actor Paul Fix, and a team of tough regular Joes from central casting to fight the cruel Japanese with rifles, dynamite, and heavy construction equipment. The Japanese routinely smile before they kill someone with a sniper rifle or gun down the unarmed. Most of the Japanese die comic-book style, yelling "Aiyeee." Watching an enemy trooper being eaten by a Yank steam shovel pleased kids when this movie was shown at matinees. But while driving a bulldozer laden with dynamite at the enemy, the Duke is shot out of the driver's seat. It is one of but a handful of films in which he dies.

Back to Bataan (1945)—As a US Army officer leading Philippine guerillas against their oppressive Japanese overlords, Wayne, acting with strong supporting actor Anthony Quinn (as a Philippine army officer), avenges the death of a young Filipino boy who leads a Japanese truck convoy over a cliff to save the good guys. Then he avenges the Americans who died at Bataan in 1942, villagers killed and molested by the Japanese, and many, many others. His Tommy gun gets a good workout.

They Were Expendable (1945)—On his return from naval duty, director John Ford made this film tribute to the sailors who manned the PT boat fleet that helped US forces hold out for months against the Japanese military in and around the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in 1942. First billed is actor Robert Montgomery, a veteran of WWII naval combat who had just been discharged back into the Hollywood population. His film reputation was mostly built on smooth and sophisticated comedies and roles calling for snappy dialogue delivery. Wayne is billed second, but beside good drinking buddy and perennial supporting actor Ward Bond, he makes the strongest appeal for the viewers' attention. This film was begun before the war's end, but was not released until shortly after the Japanese surrender.

JOHN WAYNE'S WAR

by John E. Stanchak

California studios doing odd jobs. Then he found a full-time post as a prop man and became acquainted with movie director John Ford. In charge of a gaggle of geese to be released from pens to wander through a scene in one Ford film, Duke blew his cue. Geese scattered across the set, and Ford flew into a temper tantrum. It was an inauspicious beginning to what would eventually become a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

To pick up additional cash, Duke worked as an extra in crowd scenes, which sometimes was as simple as putting on a cowboy hat and standing at the back of a group of movie cowpunchers in large outdoor shots. But now he was handsome as well as tall, with a presence on screen that made it hard for him to be anonymous. One woman from a casting department summed up the John Wayne of this period like this: "If that is not a Man, I have never seen one."

changed the actor's name to John Wayne. With that, the Morrison boy disappeared and a young movie professional took to the set.

Walsh's talkie *The Big Trail* was a box office disappointment—not because of John Wayne, but because Walsh had shot a wide-screen movie that made Western scenery and vistas a star of the show. Most theaters at the time weren't able to project the film as intended. The *Big Trail* on a little screen turned out to be no big thing.

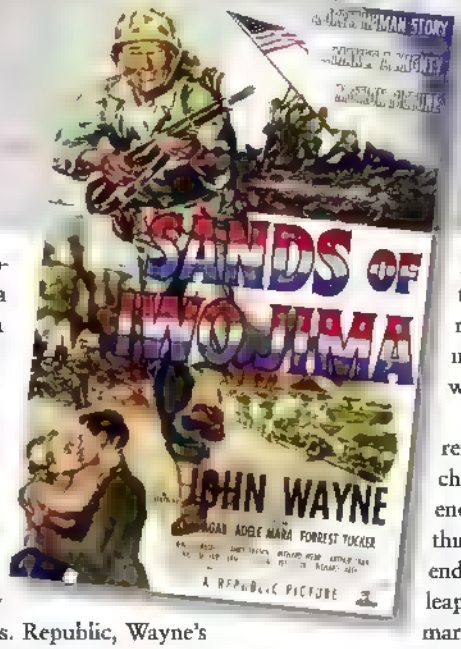
Starting over, Wayne became a contract player with small studios, starring in hour-long B-westerns, short programs all but custom-made for kids' Saturday matinees. In the days before television, these quick movies with predictable plots were turned out as fast as one a week. The work hours were relentless, but the format schooled Duke in the trade, teaching him stunt work, horsemanship, and basic screen acting techniques.

Through the Depression, Wayne appeared in 63

In 1929 Duke racked up 17 uncredited appearances and one credited as "Duke Morrison" in the feature *Words and Music*. The following year director Raoul Walsh decided to make a western epic with sound and feature a fresh new face in the lead. After watching six foot, four-inch Duke move heavy prop furniture with ease and hearing him speak, Walsh believed he'd found his man. The 23 year-old said yes to the offer of a lead part, and Walsh films, most of them westerns, until the banner year 1939, the year many fans of Old Hollywood productions call the best year in movie history. The hits *Wizard of Oz*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Beau Geste*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Dark Victory*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Stagecoach* were among the many notable pictures released that year. Wayne's biographers also mark 1939 as the year Wayne became a star.

Above: John Wayne might never have become such a big wartime star if not for his breakthrough role in the 1939 western *Stagecoach*. Here he poses with the costumed cast of that now-classic film. Opposite: *Sands of Iwo Jima* depicts the invasion of the island where marines (and a navy medic) famously raised the American flag in February 1945. Here Major General Graves B. Erskine, who led the 3rd Marine Division on Iwo, visits the set of the 1949 film.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS



Stagecoach featured an ensemble cast. Prominent in it were Thomas Mitchell as a drunken doctor and John Carradine as a gambler. But the Duke's turn as the rifle toting outlaw Ringo Kid wowed the audiences and critics. With that part he moved from being a matinee cowboy to a bankable film star. In the case of Republic Pictures—chiefly a maker of matinee westerns and movie serials—its only bankable film star. *Stagecoach* had been an independent production made by Walter Wanger, directed by John Ford, and distributed by United Artists. Republic, Wayne's contract holder, had lent his services to Wanger and Ford. The film may have made Wayne's reputation, but it also made Republic's bottom line.

A SHORT HITCH IN THE NAVY or Marine Corps might have helped smooth out some of Duke's domestic problems, but his 2-A draft deferment kept even the government from coming to his rescue. Republic had fought for and won that deferment in court, arguing that if Wayne went overseas with the military, the company would go bankrupt. Wayne wrote to his friend and mentor Ford late in the war to ask him how to go about enlisting. Ford, who had served in the Pacific theater filming combat, sent a terse reply: go ahead and volunteer and I'll get you into a film production unit; the other matters will sort themselves out later.

The Duke couldn't bring himself to do it. He refused to turn his back on Josephine and the children and Chata, and he couldn't cope with an enormous lawsuit from Republic Pictures. But things did sort themselves out. In 1945, as the war ended, Josephine granted Wayne a divorce, and he leapt from the frying pan into the fire, promptly marrying the abusive Chata. Not long afterward, Wayne's Republic contract expired, never to be renewed.

In 1949 Wayne starred in the hit film *Sands of Iwo Jima*. He received a best-actor nomination for his portrayal of marine Sergeant John Stryker hounding, bullying, and otherwise pushing his men to excel in their WWII combat training because they would need it to survive the fights to come. "Life is tough," Stryker says. "But it's a lot tougher if you're stupid." To the intelligent, if brow beaten, Wayne, the irony of the line was inescapable. ☆

JOHN E. STANCHAK *writes frequently on Hollywood and other home-front subjects for* America in WWII.

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII*, DECEMBER 2013

Bombs Away

VICTORVILLE
ARMY AIR FIELD
JULY 1, 1944

©☆!~·~—SIR!

The Mouse Versus Der Führer

The Axis nearly wrecked Walt Disney's animated film enterprise. But Mickey, Donald, and the Disney creative arsenal helped wreck the Axis instead.

by David Lesjak

WALT DISNEY WAS RIDING HIGH. He had transformed his film studio from a small, insignificant player in 1923 to an industry leader in 1938. Disney's first full-length feature, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), was a huge success, grossing an estimated $8.5 million. The profits built a new, state-of-the-art facility in Burbank for the company officially known as Walt Disney Productions. With Mickey Mouse at the height of his popularity and several features in production, the future looked promising.

Then, in late 1938, German boots stepped off to trample Europe, and Disney's future suddenly looked bleak. The studio had been distributing its films to 55 countries, and overseas markets accounted for more than 50 percent of revenue. That income evaporated almost overnight as Nazi invasion caused overseas markets to collapse. By 1944, 81 percent of box office revenue came from just three countries: the United States, Canada, and England.

Everything changed again with Pearl Harbor. On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attack, Disney received an urgent report: there had been an invasion of sorts at his facilities. "I got a call from the Studio Manager," Disney recounted. "He said, 'Walt, the Army is moving in on us.' Five hundred troops moved into the Studio." The servicemen were part of an anti-aircraft unit sent to protect defense contractors in Southern California. The unit would service their equipment in the Disney sound stages and store ammunition in the parking lot. That same day, the US Navy Bureau of Aeronautics offered Disney a contract to produce 20 training films on aircraft and warship identification. The series became known as WEFT—an acronym for Wings, Engine, Fuselage, and Tail. It was the start of the studio's association with America's armed forces. Disney was going to war.

By 1943, Disney was producing more than 90 percent of its output under government contract. Seventy five training films, for all branches of the military, were part of that. Topics for these works strayed far from standard Disney fare to include torpedo tactics, chemical warfare, precision bombing, aircraft carrier landing techniques, camouflage, and glider training. There were technical titles such as *Operation and Maintenance of the Electronic Turbo Supercharger, Gyroscopic Creep and Precession in Torpedoes,* and *Theory of Simplex and Phantom Circuits.* Disney artists received clearance to work on several top-secret films. As work began on *Fixed Gunnery and Fighter Tactics* and *High Level Precision Bombing* and other films on highly sensitive subjects, security at the studio tightened. Entry into areas where these films were being made was severely restricted

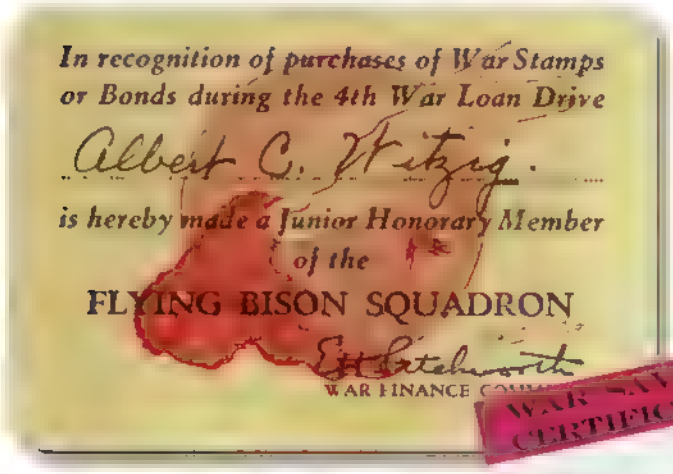
The studio released five anti-Nazi propaganda films during the war. Disney's publicity department referred to them as "psychological productions." They included *Reason and Emotion, Chicken Little, Education for Death, Der Fuehrer's Face,* and *Victory through Airpower. Der Fuehrer's Face* won the Academy

ALL IMAGES THIS STORY COURTESY OF DAVID LESJAK

Disney characters turned up all over promoting the war effort. Opposite: Donald Duck sights a target on this cover of *Bombs Away*, the magazine-style newsletter of California's Victorville Army Air Field. Above: Disney artist Hank Porter cast Donald with Mickey Mouse and Goofy in this reimagined Revolutionary War scene on the cover of the program for the St. Louis variety show *It's Fun to Be Free.*

Award for Best Cartoon Short Subject in 1943. In the film, Donald Duck dreams he's a worker in a Nazi munitions factory. He wakes up from his nightmare by film's end to pronounce how happy he is to be a citizen of the United States of America. The film's theme song, *Der Fuehrer's Face*, sold over 1.5 million records. Southern Music reported it had "sold 15,000 copies of the song in a space of time comparative to that in which *Deep in the Heart of Texas* sold when it was first published, and that song broke existing records."

As the war continued, the draft took away many of Disney's best artists and eventually would take one third of the company's employees. A service star banner that hung at the studio bore 165 stars by 1944, one star for each employee in the service. Five of the stars were gold, honoring those killed in the line of duty. "They seem to think we're still doing Mickey Mouse," Walt Disney remarked about draft officials who wouldn't classify studio jobs as war work exempt from conscription. He invited draft board members to the studio to see firsthand the important government work being done. The visitors had to be cleared by intelligence, yet they still found areas of the studio off limits to them due to the top-secret nature of the military projects artists were working on there. The point was made. Soon, the studio was put under the jurisdiction of the Manning Table and Replacement Schedule, which allowed companies that did important wartime work to keep key employees who might otherwise be drafted.


In recognition of purchases of War Stamps
or Bonds during the 4th War Loan Drive
Albert C. Fitzig
is hereby made a Junior Honorary Member
of the
FLYING BISON SQUADRON
WAR FINANCE

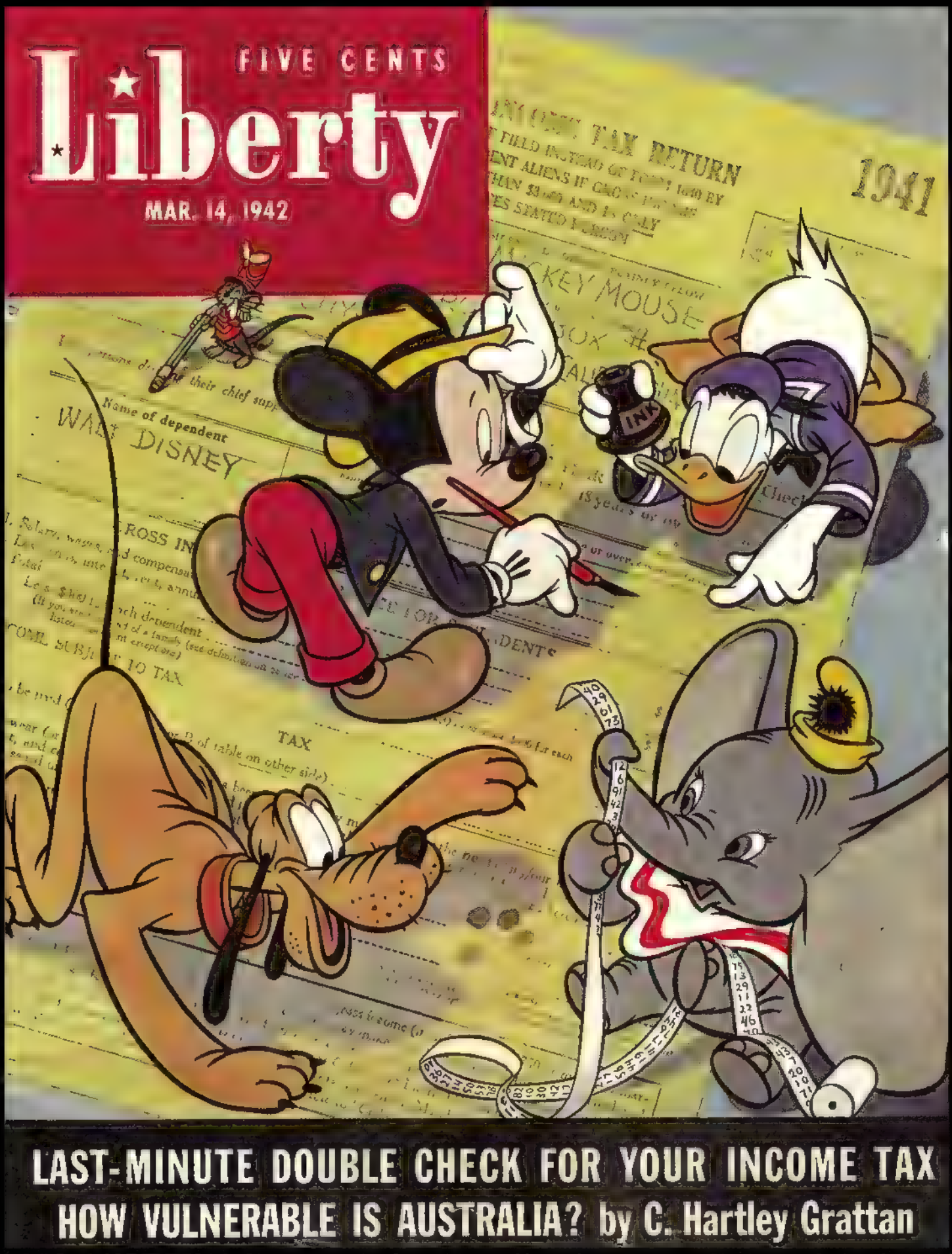
The employees who remained made all kinds of contributions to the war effort right there on the home front. They worked extensively with Disney's stable of characters to promote blood drives, victory gardens, and government rationing, plus nutrition, and tax initiatives. The studio became involved in several war bond campaigns, including the fifth war loan drive in mid-1944. To help promote the sale of Series E smaller-denomination bonds, Disney allowed a certificate to be printed with 22 of its most popular characters.

Staffers themselves purchased bonds at the rate of $3,500 per week. By 1944 they'd achieved a 91 percent participation rate, with 10 percent of payroll dollars going into war bonds. They also donated 418 pints of blood and $7,300 to the Red Cross. Walt Disney himself got involved during a scrap drive in August 1942, sending a telegram to the War Production Board to drum up positive publicity for recycling drives. "I have in my front yard two iron deer...," the message read. "I would like Uncle Sam to have this metal if you would let me know where to send it." An article on the subject appeared in the September 7, 1942, issue of *Life* magazine. Accompanying it was a photo of Walt Disney about to smash one of the deer with a sledgehammer.

One of the first home-front projects the studio completed under contract was not for the United States, but for Canada. In August 1941, before the United States entered the war, Disney had signed a contract with Canada's National Film Board to produce four war bond films and one training film. To meet the board's budget and time constraints, Disney reused animation from several previously released films, including *Three Little Pigs* (1933) and *Snow White*.

After America joined the war, Disney's biggest endorsement was for the US Treasury Department, promoting the payment of income tax. In 1941, new revenue laws created seven million new American taxpayers. Fearing a revolt, Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau asked Walt Disney for help in convincing new taxpayers it was their patriotic duty to pay. The resulting film, *The New Spirit*, was completed in an unheard of four weeks at a time when most shorts took between six and eight months to produce. The film featured Donald Duck as an enthu-

Above, left: A Disney artist did the background illustration for this card given to youngsters who aided the city of Buffalo's attempt to buy a squadron of fighters for the military. Above, inset: Disney art even showed up in the wartime materials of America's allies. This folder for war savings certificates, the studio's first home-front project of the war, was done for Canada five months before Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Above, right: Walt Disney shows Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau, Jr., storyboards for a film the department commissioned to encourage Americans to pay their taxes. Opposite: The Disney tax short made *Liberty* magazine's March 14, 1942, cover.


FIVE CENTS
Liberty
MAR. 14, 1942
1941
INCOME TAX RETURN
MICKEY MOUSE
Name of dependent
WALT DISNEY
INK
LAST-MINUTE DOUBLE CHECK FOR YOUR INCOME TAX
HOW VULNERABLE IS AUSTRALIA? by C. Hartley Grattan

Once word got out that Disney was creating fun new insignia for the military, waves of requests started rolling in. Hank Porter led a team of artists who churned out numerous designs throughout the course of the war. Although they were diligent and quick, they never could catch up with the overwhelming backlog of requests for unique treatments. The rough sketches and final, colored treatments here represent various army and navy units and vessels (above, left to right, top to bottom): the aircraft carrier USS *Wasp (CV-18)*; the US Army 13th Armored Division; the US Army 530th Engineer Light Pontoon Company; the US Navy submarine tender *Anthedon (AS-24)*; Company B of the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion (Seabees); the US Navy minesweeper *YMS-41*; Ship Construction, Repair, and Maintenance (SCRAM) of the US Navy District Industrial Incentive Division; the US Army 628th Tank Destroyer Battalion; and the USS *Wasp*'s Fighter Squadron 7 (VF-7).

siastic taxpayer and the slogan "Taxes to beat the Axis."

Disney thought the tax film would draw positive attention, but it did the opposite. Treasury had agreed to pay $80,000 for the production. The monetary request was included in a deficiency appropriations bill—but the bill was defeated in Congress One House member said the expense was an "unjustifiable increase in the burden already confronting taxpayers." Walt Disney received hate mail because of the film, accusing him of being a war profiteer. The negative publicity aside, Disney felt vindicated when a Gallup poll estimated that 37 percent of those who had seen the film said it had a positive impact on their willingness to pay. A sequel, *The New Spirit*, was underway six months later. This time, money was appropriated from Congress *before* work began.

More of Disney's contributions to home front projects appeared in print than on film. Disney artists designed numerous posters for use on the home front. They made a series of three promoting balanced diets and nutrition for the Food Distribution Administration in 1943 and an anti job-hopping poster for the War Manpower Commission in 1944. They designed other posters for the USO and the Aircraft Warning Service, and one for the Forest Service that featured a stereotyped Japanese as a firebug.

One of the most successful contributions civilians made to the war effort was growing produce in Victory Gardens at home, and Disney helped promote the movement. Disney artist Hank Porter created the cover illustration for the National Victory Garden Institute's 1944 "Green Thumb" contest booklet. As a tie-in, a Disney-licensed company produced a Victory Garden sign showing Donald Duck chasing pests from his vegetable patch.

In a more unusual home front contribution, a group of Disney artists volunteered to create scale models of key industrial and military facilities for US Army engineers, showing the before and after effects of camouflaging them to hinder possible attempts at aerial bombing. The group also created contour models of strategic objectives for the US Marine Corps and designed and crafted a camouflage net that was strung over a portion of Lockheed's facility in Burbank.

Staying with the theme of the unusual, the owner of the Sun Rubber Company approached Disney in January 1942 with the idea of making a rubber gas mask for children, fashioned in the likeness of Mickey Mouse. Disney met with members of the Chemical Warfare Service, who approved the idea. Production of the mask was canceled in April 1942, however, when rubber was diverted to prioritized military needs.

Top: Some Disney military insignia showed up on consumer products. This bottle of Victory Beer from Detroit's Koppitz-Melchers brewery features art for the Mosquito Fleet of PT boats. Above: Hank Porter designs an insignia for USS *Pegasus*. He drew 85 percent of the 1,100 insignia created by Disney studios.

Probably Disney's longest-lasting running contribution to the war effort was the creation of more than 1,100 combat insignia for all branches of the US military and its allies. No other single design source generated so many insignia. Hank Porter, whom Walt Disney called a "one-man art department," was responsible for creating upwards of 85 percent of the designs originating at the studio.

Porter started his Disney career as an animator on *Snow White*. Continued eye strain from the glare of the animation light board proved too much, so he was transferred to the publicity art department, where he eventually produced hundreds of illustrations used in children's books, advertising, magazines, newspapers, fan cards, and even the studio Christmas card.

The first request for a unit insignia arrived at the studio in June 1939. Naval Reserve Aviation Cadet Burt Stanley asked for a design for Fighter Squadron 7, based aboard the carrier USS *Wasp*. Walt Disney responded by having one of his artists create an emblem featuring an angry wasp with boxing gloves.

Request number two came in March 1940, when a naval operations officer requested a design for the Motor Torpedo Boats (PT boats), known affectionately as the Mosquito Fleet. The resulting insignia featured a mosquito wearing a sailor's cap and riding a torpedo over the waves. In a letter of appreciation, Lieutenant John Bulkeley, commander of Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 3, wrote, "Your insignia contributed...to the spirit and morale of the Squadron. You have had a definite part in the successful operations of the Squadron...and General MacArthur's successful withdrawal from Bataan."

Most insignia requests arrived by letter, although some were made in person. Porter's daughter Maxine, who worked as her father's assistant in 1944, recalled, "[He would try to] use as many of the things as they told him. He'd show [them] an idea..., get them all excited and then he'd finish it later."

Insignia requests peaked following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In early 1942, Walt Disney summoned Porter to his office. "Mister, you have yourself a job," he said. "Just settle down to it. Make as many insignia as you can. If you get overloaded..., let me know."

The volume of requests soon outpaced Porter's production capability. In 1942 he assembled a team with four other artists he could call on for help. By April 1942 Porter's group was more than 200 requests behind. That figure only grew as the war progressed. The designs were so popular and the backlog so overwhelming that the

The Mouse Versus Der Führer by David Lesjak

Above: In a publicity photo, a girl wearing a Mickey Mouse gas mask puts a doll into a tent made to protect infants from chemical attack. Right: The mask was never mass-produced, because rubber supplies were diverted to military use.

navy issued a directive asking all personnel to stop requesting designs specifically from Porter.

The first step in creating an insignia was to select a Disney character or create a new whimsical character. An artist then made rough design sketches that evolved into a final pencil draft. He inked the lines and filled them in using watercolors. The art was photographed and shipped to whomever initiated the request.

Donald Duck was the most requested character. Many units related to his combative attitude. Most of the designs, however, didn't feature a recognizable character. In many cases, Porter created fanciful birds, fish, insects, and the like that were suited to a unit's function. If a submarine was named after a fish, for example, Porter would often use that specific fish in the design.

In October 1941, Porter and Disney story man Roy Williams created the insignia for the Flying Tigers. Porter later received a gold and cloisonné clasp pin in the shape of the insignia as a token of the unit's appreciation.

In the fall of 1941, Porter designed an insignia for the HMS *Illustrious*. While the British carrier underwent repairs in Virginia, Louis Mountbatten, the carrier's commander, embarked on a goodwill tour of the United States. En route to Pearl Harbor, Mountbatten visited Disney's studio, where he saw Porter creating insignia. "Say, I like that!" he said. "How about one for the *Illustrious*?" Porter's design featured Donald Duck in an admiral's uniform astride a toy model of the carrier.

There is no doubt that a Disney-designed insignia added to the morale of the unit receiving it. "It seems the designs find a lot of favor because they have a tendency to knit a squadron or a battalion...closer together," Walt Disney said. "That's the kind of spirit...we need. If the designs can help foster it, there'll be designs."

Dan Sjodin, commanding officer of the 831st Bombardment Squadron, echoed Walt Disney's thoughts when he spoke about his squadron's Disney designed emblem. "We were so darned proud.... It was such a morale boost to have a nice insignia. It made our outfit tops! The other squadrons... You could tell they saw that insignia and said 'I wish the Hell we had one'."

Walt Disney felt passionately about his studio's insignia contributions. The requests came from servicemen who had grown up with

Opposite: In an August 1942 ad in *Good Housekeeping*, Huey, Dewey, and Louie earn money from their Uncle Donald, then sweat their way past candy, toys, and an amusement park to buy bond stamps.

"The Victory March"

The Mouse Versus Der Führer

by David Lesjak

The W.L. Stensgaard Advertising Company licensed Donald Duck from Disney for this masonite-board Victory Garden marker. The post-mounted sign was sold in general stores and groceries at a suggested retail price of $1.69.

his characters: they had supported his films, had been members of the Mickey Mouse Club, and had spent their allowances on his merchandise. "Let them write and tell us what they want, and we'll do our part...," Disney said. "We are more than glad to pitch in with them." The work was all gratis. "We did it all for them for nothing...," Disney said, "because you can hardly turn them down."

WITH A TOTAL COST of approximately $30,000, the studio's insignia contribution was substantial. "Never mind what the job is costing us," said Disney. "That isn't important."

Coming from a man whose business spent almost the entire war in debt, those were no hollow words of showy patriotism. Almost all the studio's wartime features performed poorly at the box office. By 1942 its deficit topped $1.2 million, and it wasn't until 1945 that the studio was able to post a small, $50,000 profit.

But it didn't take Disney long to bounce back from the crippling effect of the war. In England, the studio soon produced its first-ever live-action film, an immensely popular adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. At home, Walt Disney hastily scribbled a note that mentioned plans for a "Mickey Mouse Park." Seven years later that park opened as Disneyland. It was all downhill from there. ★

DAVID LESJAK *of Langley, British Columbia, is an avid collector of vintage Disney art and artifacts. He is the author of the blogs vintage disneymemorabilia blogspot.com and toonsatwar.blogspot.com.*

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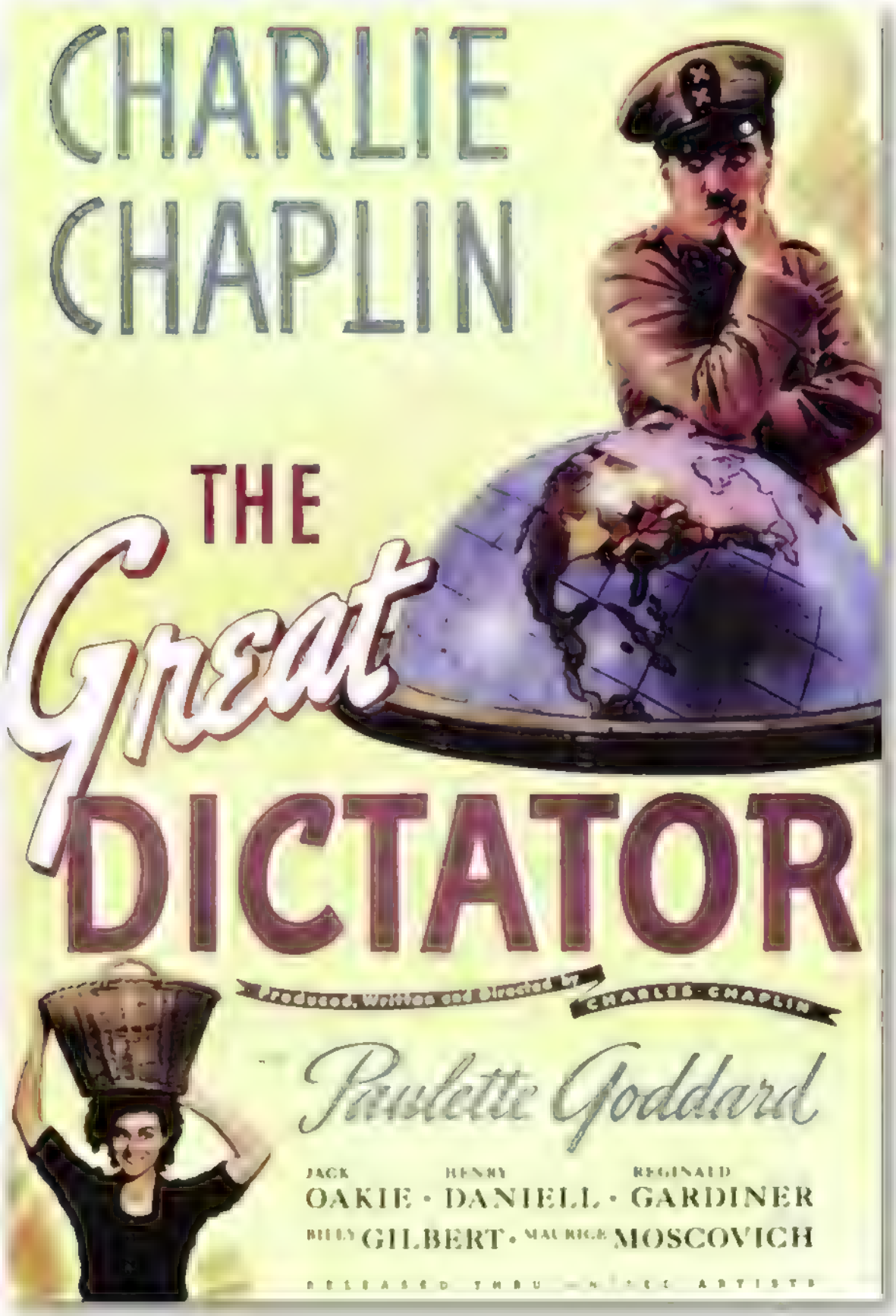

CHARLIE CHAPLIN
THE Great DICTATOR
Produced, Written and Directed by CHARLIE CHAPLIN
Paulette Goddard
JACK OAKIE • HENRY DANIELL • REGINALD GARDINER
BILLY GILBERT • MAURICE MOSCOVICH
RELEASED THRU UNITED ARTISTS

COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

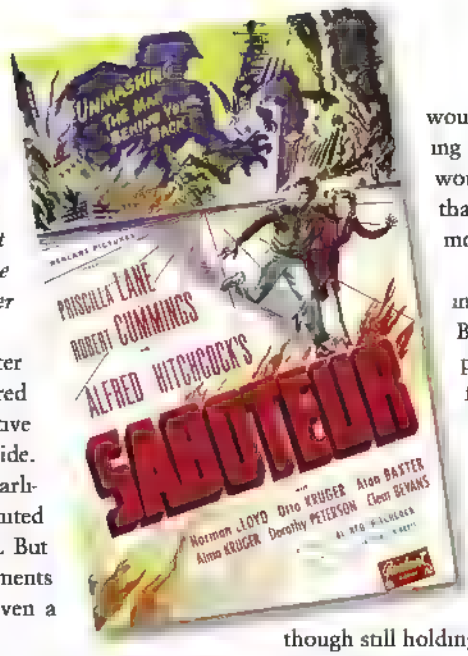
UNITED ARTISTS • PREMIERED IN 1940

HANGING ON WITH Hitchcock

Critics said Alfred Hitchcock left England just in time to avoid Nazi bombs. But in Hollywood, he made films to help win the war. by John E. Stanchak

Fry dangles from the torch of the Statue of Liberty, 300 feet in the air, his eyes wide with terror. The only thing between him and a horrible end is the desperate grip his pursuer has on his coat sleeve. His wispy hair billows in the wind. He gasps. The threads holding his sleeve together begin to give way…

It's 1942 inside an American movie theater and the audience is watching director Alfred Hitchcock's *Saboteur*—and holding its collective breath. Why? Not because they're on Fry's side. He's a cruel fascist, after all, and moments earlier, he was part of a bloody plot against the United States. He *deserves* an ugly fall to his death. But Hitchcock is capable of manipulating the elements of suspense and human instinct to make even a straightforward scene deliciously tense.



When it came to audience-gripping twists and turns, Hitchcock was the master. And in the middle of a desperate war for the survival of Western civilization, during the most frightening public crisis America had ever faced, he managed to make moviegoers look away from the real threats all around them and instead peer into someone else's nightmare—and be entertained by it. He would do this often during World War II, claiming a unique niche in the history of the era. He would also perform a service to the Allied cause that the American public wouldn't discover for more than a generation.

Hitchcock was already a director when he immigrated to the United States from Great Britain in 1939. Instantly recognized by his proud, plump, and pouty profile, he was famous for his globally popular British crime thrillers. Ambitious Hollywood producer David O. Selznick eagerly recruited him to work on a prestige project, the filming of Daphne du Maurier's best-selling Gothic suspense novel *Rebecca*. It was Hitchcock's first American movie, and it was a hit when released in 1940. But Selznick, though still holding Hitchcock's contract, had no more immediate work for him. So, to keep the cash flowing, he loaned the director out to Universal Pictures for a fee, to make a thriller about the new war in Europe. And without meaning to, Selznick gave Hitchcock a gift.

Born in 1899, Hitchcock came from a successful clan of grocers in the London region. He was no more than a pudgy boy when

OPPOSITE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; RIGHT: COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

A bad end for a bad man (opposite): the villainous Fry begins his tortured slide from the Statue of Liberty's torch in Alfred Hitchcock's 1942 wartime thriller *Saboteur* (poster above). Barry Kane, the man falsely blamed for Fry's heinous act of sabotage, will try desperately to save the Axis troublemaker for arrest and questioning. Will he succeed? Hitchcock knew how to grab and hold viewers' attention with suspense.

Foreign Correspondent (1940)

Jones (Joel McCrea) is a young American reporter sent to Europe before the outbreak of World War II. Covering last-minute negotiations in Holland, he witnesses what seems to be the assassination of a diplomat. Along with new friends Carol (Laraine Day) and ffolliott (George Sanders), he pursues the assassins into the Dutch countryside, where windmills become hiding places.

The chase leads Jones to Britain, revealing fascist sympathizers and Fifth Columnists everywhere and forcing the audience to witness the brutal interrogation of an elderly man through the victim's eyes. Jones himself narrowly escapes death or kidnapping several times.

The suspense results from uncertainty about who are the good guys and who are the bad. That, plus a scene-stealing small part by sweet-faced character actor Edmund Gwenn as the world's jolliest assassin, a frighteningly realistic airline crash seen from the doomed pilot's cockpit, and a famous bit of camera work where a man is gunned down in the pouring rain amid a sea of umbrellas (actor Charles Wagenheim is about to pull the trigger above) earned this film several Oscar nominations, including one for special effects. It lost in the Best Picture category to *Rebecca*, also directed that year by Alfred Hitchcock.

the Great War came along in 1914. He wasn't ready or suited for regular military service, but he *was* patriotic. He volunteered for a home defense unit that set him up in a uniform and marched him around neighborhood parks with his fellows. As Hitchcock remembered, his unit required him to wear puttees, khaki-colored leg wrappings that he could never get to stop unraveling as he drilled. That summed up his national service in the great crisis.

Following the WWI armistice, Hitchcock worked as a sales representative for an electrical parts manufacturer and volunteered to edit and contribute to the company's in-house magazine. Then he seized an opportunity to design title cards for the new and growing British silent film industry. He learned the movie-making craft hands-on, directing a few silent features while studying the work of German filmmakers. He even married a British film editor and screen writer, Alma Reville, in 1926.

Just 40 years old when he arrived in Hollywood to join the American film industry, Hitchcock had already won acclaim for his British thrillers. But his move across the Atlantic on the eve of war with Germany brought criticism from some fellow Brits.

In 1927, Hitchcock began making hits. He filmed *The Lodger*, a fright fest about a landlady who suspects her new tenant is a serial killer. A police story, *Blackmail*, did well in 1929. When asked, he would make comedies and morality tales, but with the advent of sound, he hit his stride in the suspense genre. Crime films like *Number 17* (about thieves) and *Secret Agent* (about international intrigue) made him popular in Britain. The 1935 spy hit *The 39 Steps* and the wildly popular 1938 international thriller *The Lady Vanishes* were released to great reviews in America. At that point, Hollywood couldn't exactly take credit for discovering Hitchcock, but it had to admit it couldn't resist him.

After a pleasure trip to America in 1938, Hitchcock entered negotiations with Selznick, and the following year he moved to California to make his name in the world's film capital. At that time, Hollywood was filling up with refugee artists from Adolf Hitler's bitter piece of Europe. Then came the outbreak of war between Germany and Britain and France. Back in London, old associates carped about how "Alfred the Great" was safely and comfortably settled under the California sun while they were looking down the business end of Nazi cannons. But return to Britain for war service, at age 40, grossly overweight, married, the father of a little girl? What could he be expected to do?

Hitchcock was stung by his critics' remarks, though he was not defenseless against them. Taunted as a child at school for his rotundity and for smelling of fish and groceries (his family lived above a store), he had developed a sharp wit and could fire off funny rebuttals with the best of them. He had also learned to reach out to his large extended family for emotional support. (Over his lifetime, he traveled to Britain as often as possible to visit with siblings, cousins, nieces, and nephews and always sent them letters, cards, and gifts.) Then there was his wife, Alma, who loved every pound of him. Mother to their young daughter Patricia, she was frequently his script doctor and always his closest coworker and ally, but she shunned the spotlight. He marveled that he'd won her, saying drolly, "I was an uncommonly unattractive young man."

Hitchcock's film assignment from Universal helped him work through the problem his critics raised. Titled *Foreign Correspondent*, the film was a story was about a vital Yank newsman in Europe at the moment war ignites, a likeable but callow fellow who uncovers a network of nameless enemies of England, villains working for the nation's conquest. By making such a film, Hitchcock could overtly cast his lot with the forces of good and take some shots at the free world's enemies.

Saboteur (1942)

Barry Kane (Robert Cummings) is working in a military aircraft factory in California. An enemy saboteur sets off a fiery explosion that shuts down the plant and kills Kane's best friend. Circumstances make Barry seem to be the culprit. But he suspects he knows the real saboteur and sets off on a 3,000-mile cross-country hunt. Barry must dodge law enforcement officers—and enemy agents who don't want him to catch up with the real killer, a bogus worker named Fry (Norman Lloyd).

Along the way, Barry is sheltered by a blind man who lives in a forest cabin and later by a troupe of circus freaks. Then he meets Mr. Tobin (Otto Kruger), the wealthy and charming financier behind the sabotage campaign.

Kruger succeeds as Tobin, but Hitchcock originally wanted kindly-looking Western veteran Harry Carey, the vice president in 1939's classic *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and mentor to John Wayne. Carey's wife Olive, a film veteran herself, came between her husband, the studio, and Hitchcock, asserting that her husband was a film icon on the same level as humorist Will Rogers and cowboy star Tom Mix and that playing Tobin would ruin his image. Olive won the argument.

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ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S PRODUCTION OF
Lifeboat
by JOHN STEINBECK
TALLULAH BANKHEAD
20
WILLIAM BENDIX · SLEZAK · ANDERSON · HODIAK · HULL · ANGEL · CRONYN · LEE

Lifeboat (1944)

Somewhere between the United States and Bermuda, an armed merchant ship exchanges fire with a Nazi U-boat. Both vessels are destroyed. The film opens as eight surviving adults and an infant take shelter in a lifeboat. Soon they pick up a German sailor named Willy. (All nine adults are visible in the poster above.) Debris and oil cover the sea. No one else has survived.

The infant dies and its distraught mother leaps into the ocean. Newswoman Connie Porter (Tallulah Bankhead), who speaks German, questions Willy (Walter Slezak). He claims to know the way to Bermuda and the route of an approaching supply ship. The other survivors, from varied social classes and backgrounds, debate whether to row where Willy points or to set their own course. They decide to believe the German.

Suspense derives from more than the castaways' hunger and thirst. The Allied passengers quibble about dividing work and supplies, what to do about wounded seaman Gus Smith (William Bendix), and whether to trust Willy. Ship's engineer John Kovac (John Hodiak), a rough working man and labor activist, has it out for capitalist Charles Rittenhouse (Henry Hull) and works up sexual tension for husky-voiced Connie. African American steward Joe Spencer (Canada Lee)—whom the bigoted Rittenhouse calls "George"—asserts his dignity and shared humanity. Mild-mannered ship's radio operator Sparks (Hume Cronyn) warms to timid Miss Anderson. Then we discover that Willy understands English and Gus has gangrene. Deadly problems ensue.

The New York Film Critics named Bankhead best actress for *Lifeboat*. Alfred Hitchcock was nominated for an Oscar. But political columnist Dorothy Thompson and culture critic Bosley Crowther complained that *Lifeboat* portrayed the Allied characters as angry and disaffected and the Nazi as smart, strong, and superior.

HANGING ON WITH Hitchcock by John E. Stanchak

IMAGES THIS SPREAD: COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

Hitchcock answered his detractors by making war films like 1944's unsettling *Lifeboat*. Here, he chats on set with actress Tallulah Bankhead. The New York Film Critics named her best actress for her role in the film.

Of course, Hollywood being Hollywood, the job was harder than it needed to be. Hitchcock wanted to cast Gary Cooper in the lead, but Cooper was hesitant. Hitchcock was, after all, a new man in town. No one had seen *Rebecca* yet. Cooper decided against taking the role, so Universal persuaded Hitchcock to go with relative newcomer Joel McCrea. Then came the ludicrous part: because of US neutrality laws and censorship boards, at no time could Hitchcock name Germany or Italy in the script, use the labels Nazi or Fascist, or otherwise make any obvious allusions to England's enemies.

Unfazed, Hitchcock fell back on script approaches that he had used in Britain, where government censors had barred him from pointing to or hinting at Germany as the adversarial government in *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes*. And to his relief, he discovered McCrea had charm and took direction well. The result was that *Foreign Correspondent* was a 1940 hit, directly competing with *Rebecca*.

Hitchcock made successful crime pictures during the ensuing war years: *Suspicion* (1941), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), and *Spellbound* (1945). But he also enjoyed the challenge of two other war films, *Saboteur* (1942) and *Lifeboat* (1944). These two movies made significant contributions to the art of film. Better yet—from Hitchcock's point of view—they enlightened, thrilled, and vexed the public with high tension.

In 1943, in the midst of it all, Hitchcock embarked for Britain, telling everyone he was off to visit relatives. The story was something of a cover. While overseas, with the silent assent of Hollywood, he made two films in French for Britain's Ministry of Information, *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*.

Both were released in 1944 in support of the Free French and for security reasons were not initially credited to Hitchcock. They were short but spellbinding. In *Bon Voyage*, an English POW escapes a German camp and works his way across Europe with a companion, helped along by the French resistance. On reaching Britain, the escapee tells his story to a military intelligence officer. Then comes a shocking twist, as the intelligence officer retells the story based on what he knows: the POW's companion was actually a Nazi agent who revealed to the enemy the identities of all who helped them. In *Aventure Malgache*, the operator of a clandestine Free French radio outpost in the Vichy French colony of Madagascar deals with a wily military police official while keeping up his public cover as an Axis sympathizer.

Back in Hollywood, 1944 was the year Hitchcock made the wartime classic *Lifeboat*. He also made an uncredited fictional short with new starlet Jennifer Jones titled *The Fighting Generation*, about hospitalized returning veterans. The next year, he made a US government documentary about the Dumbarton Oaks Conference (the August–October 1944 conference in Washington, DC, that laid plans for the United Nations) and the Allied plan for the postwar world, *Watchtower over Tomorrow*.

During the war's final year, Hitchcock turned his attention to a work for the British Army, uncredited and unseen by the public until after Hitchcock's death. It was a documentary about the Holocaust and the German extermination camps, made to inform the British officer corps about the genocidal horrors that had just been uncovered. Just as chilling as it sounds, the film was broadcast on American television in 1985 by the PBS program *Frontline* and given the title *Memory of the Camps*.

A wit, an intellect, an entertainer, Hitchcock moved after the war into what were perhaps the most successful and profitable years of his career. As a gentleman of the old school, he never discussed the movies he made in government service or boasted about his part in the war effort. But his war work had taken away the pain of his detractors' taunts. ★

John E. Stanchak *of Philadelphia is a frequent contributor to* America in WWII *magazine, writing about Hollywood, scandals, politics, and his own father's US Navy service in the war.*

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII* AUGUST 20 3

Sherlock Holmes, Time Traveler

How did a 19th-century detective straight out of Victorian London end up thwarting Nazi plots in 20th-century World War II?

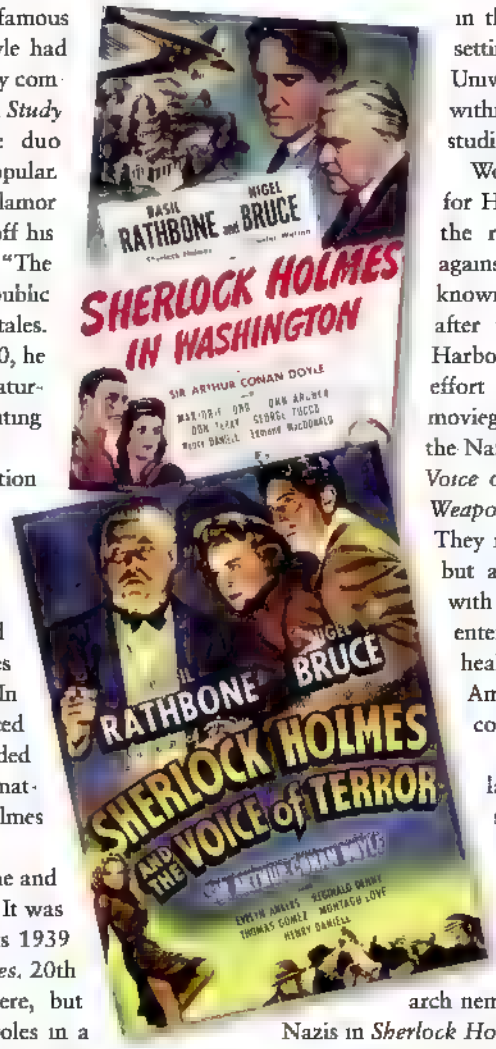
by David Norris

Sherlock Holmes, Time Traveler

by David Norris

ADOLF HITLER SHIVERED POPEYE'S TIMBERS. And he brought that fierce jungle call out of Tarzan. Both of those popular heroes took on the Fuhrer and his Nazis during World War II, pummeling the Axis bad guys with an arsenal of bulging biceps, spinach power, chest-thumping, and an ability to converse with chimpanzees. But deductive genius and mastery of disguise were useful, too, and for those, the Allies turned to the greatest detective of all time. From the mechanized, modernized era of the "Good War," Hollywood reached back to the sooty late-Victorian world of gaslights and horse-drawn Hansom cabs and plucked out none other than Sherlock Holmes.

By the early 1940s, Holmes had been famous for half a century. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had introduced the brilliant sleuth and his trusty companion Doctor Watson in the 1887 novel *A Study in Scarlet*. Short stories featuring the duo appeared in the 1890s and were wildly popular. In fact Conan Doyle grew so tired of the clamor for more Holmes episodes that he killed off his profitable protagonist in the 1893 story "The Final Problem." But he soon gave in to public demand and started writing new Holmes tales. By the time of Conan Doyle's death in 1930, he had written 56 short stories and 4 novels featuring Holmes. Holmes had fans beyond counting (including President Franklin Roosevelt).



Holmes first leapt from print into live action in 1893, when he took to the stage. After that he hit the big screen, appearing in more than 100 silent movies. Once sound was married with film, several different actors took on the roles of Holmes and Watson in talkies (including a few movies made in Nazi Germany in the late 1930s). In 1938, however, 20th Century–Fox announced a new Sherlock Holmes movie and proceeded to create one of Hollywood's greatest cinematic duos by casting Basil Rathbone as Holmes and Nigel Bruce as Watson.

The first Holmes film featuring Rathbone and Bruce was *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. It was set in the late Victorian period, as was its 1939 sequel, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. 20th Century ended its Holmes franchise there, but Rathbone and Bruce continued in their roles in a long-running radio series. (Some of the radio scripts were written by Leslie Charteris, creator of Simon Templar, the Robin Hood–like modern thief brought to life in books, on radio, and on 1960s television as The Saint.)

Universal Studios took over the Sherlock Holmes movies from 20th Century in 1942 and decided to move Holmes and Watson from the gaslit 1890s to the modern day. This was nothing new. Most Sherlock Holmes movies made over the years had been set in the filmmakers' own eras. A contemporary setting saved money on costumes and sets. At Universal, this would keep the Holmes films within the budgets of the B-movies that were the studio's specialty at the time.

World War II seemed like an appropriate era for Holmes, and Universal's first assignment for the reborn sleuth pitted his analytical mind against Nazi spies and the covert insurrectionists known as fifth columnists. Coming just months after the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor, the notion of enlisting Holmes in the war effort may have been comforting to American moviegoers. The first three of the Holmes-versus-the-Nazis films were *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror*, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*. They introduced Holmes not only as a detective, but also as an unofficial secret agent working with the British intelligence services. Beyond their entertainment value, these movies contained a healthy dose of Allied propaganda, reminding Americans of the steady resolve, loyalty, and courage of their British allies.

Along with the 1940s setting and Axis villains came other changes. Watson was substantially different. In the books, he is an intelligent man who, like the readers, is amazed at Holmes's powers of deduction. The new Watson, however, was a rather silly and sometimes childish comic sidekick. Meanwhile, less surprisingly, Holmes's arch nemesis Professor Moriarty joined up with the Nazis in *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*.

Updating Holmes from a Victorian crime-solver into a WWII spy wasn't much of a stretch. The great detective had always been a master of disguise, able to go undercover in any surroundings. The Conan Doyle short stories "The Naval Treaty," "The Second Stain," and "The Bruce Partington Plans" had been set amid tensions in Europe during World War I and involved espionage. "His Last Bow," written in 1917, saw Holmes working in disguise as a double-agent loyal to the British.

OPPOSITE & PREVIOUS SPREAD: COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM; LEFT: AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

Previous spread: In this publicity shot for 1945's *The Woman in Green*, Dr. John Watson, played by Nigel Bruce, is thunderstruck by an "elementary" conclusion arrived at by Sherlock Holmes, played by Basil Rathbone. Opposite: Holmes and Watson were denizens of Victorian London, and remained so when Rathbone and Bruce portrayed them in 1939's *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Above: Then detective and sidekick leapt into World War II, vexing Axis evildoers in films such as *Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror* (1942) and *Sherlock Holmes in Washington* (1943).

Sherlock Holmes, Time Traveler by David Norris

Sherlock Holmes and the Voice of Terror, the first of Universal's WWII Holmes films, came out in 1942. It reflects Brits' and Americans' early-war dread of enemy spies wreaking havoc on the home front. Holmes sets to work when the Voice of Terror is heard on the radio across Britain, sneering at the Allies with Nazi propaganda and warning of impending disasters caused by German sabotage.

AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

In the next movie, *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, Holmes rescues the inventor of the Tobel Bombsight from German agents in Switzerland. The fictional device parallels the real Norden Bombsight, used for precision high-altitude bombing during the war. The exact makeup of the Norden Bombsight was kept secret, but its existence was well known, due to newspaper articles that appeared in 1942. The inventor, Carl Norden, was a Dutch scientist who was educated in Switzerland and emigrated to the United States in 1904. In the movie, fictional Doctor Tobel escapes in 1942 with the help of Holmes.

Secret Weapon makes references to the original Sherlock Holmes stories, but with a WWII twist. Holmes and Tobel are walking along an ordinary London street when Tobel stumbles on some rubble on the sidewalk. They're passing a brick building that has been destroyed by a German air raid. Moments later, we discover that the ruins are next door to Holmes's rooms at 221B Baker Street—a jarring reminder of the dangers the British faced every day during the 1940 German bombing campaign known as the Blitz. Holmes's legendary Baker Street rooms are seen protected from shrapnel and bomb debris behind a barricade of sandbags.

Inside, the rooms are furnished with comfortable chairs, and there's the inviting glow of a warm fireplace. Piled on tables and shelves are books, chemistry equipment, and souvenirs of past cases. But lining the drapes of the cozy Baker Street lodgings are light-smothering blackout curtains, a WWII precaution against air raids. Outside, uniformed policemen—bobbies—patrol the blacked-out streets of the great city, their familiar tall, cork-lined cloth helmets replaced by shiny, dark steel helmets appropriate for wartime.

In late 1942 Holmes came to America in *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*. It's Holmes and Watson's first trip to the States, and the two men react quite differently. The business-like Holmes appreciates the magnificent government buildings and monuments in the capital as symbols of the democratic ideals that unite America with his native England. Watson, on the other hand, has a more down-to-earth view. On the flight from England, he reads a book on the "quaint customs and manners of America" so he'll be prepared to greet American officials with the proper salutation: "How are you, buddy?" When the greeting falters in it's first test, he consults his phrase book and continues: "What's cooking?"

In their hotel in Washington, while Holmes consults with a police officer, Watson noisily slurps a milkshake through two straws. Later, Holmes is annoyed by Watson's constant chewing as he reads the newspaper and asks what he's eating. The great detective is appalled to find that Watson has discovered American chewing gum.

The pair's first reading of a US newspaper is another study in contrasts. Holmes scans for clues that might lead to a potential witness in a case. Watson, meanwhile, enjoys the comics and observes that Flash Gordon "seems a very capable fellow." He's fascinated by the sports section. "Those Brooklyn fellows seem to be arguing with the umpire!" he exclaims, examining a photo

The Men Behind the Characters

Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce were as English as could be. But neither actor was born in England.

Philip St. John Basil Rathbone (1892–1967) was born to English parents, but in South Africa. After debuting on the London stage, he served in the British army during World War I, distinguishing himself as an intelligence officer, leading patrols into the German trenches to bring back prisoners for interrogation. His official commendations included the Military Cross.

After post-WWI stage appearances in England and the United States, Rathbone appeared in numerous Hollywood movies, beginning in the mid-1920s. His skill at swordplay and his knack for portraying villains led him to classic roles such as Sir Guy of Gisbourne in Errol Flynn's 1938 film *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. That same year newspapers announced that Rathbone was "throwing aside his cloak of villainy" after he was cast as Sherlock Holmes.

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Rathbone (right) and Bruce (left) became Hollywood's definitive Holmes and Watson.

Like Rathbone, William Nigel Ernle Bruce (1895–1953) was born far from England. The second son of a baronet, Bruce was born in California while his parents were on a vacation. In the Conan Doyle stories, the character of Doctor Watson was sometimes troubled by a wound he had received while serving as an army surgeon in the Second Afghan War. In real life, Bruce was badly wounded while serving with the WWI British army in January 1915 at Kemmel, Belgium. After months of recovery, he was commissioned as a lieutenant.

Bruce took to the British stage after the war, and eventually came to Hollywood. He was quite busy as a character actor in the 1930s, playing bumbling but likeable English gentlemen—rather like his famous portrayal of Watson.

—David A. Norris

AMERICA IN WWII COLLECTION

Above: 1943's *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon* brought Holmes's nemesis, Dr. James Moriarty, into the war on the Axis side. Opposite: Watson's voluntary WWII medical service drew Holmes into a murder case in *Sherlock Holmes Faces Death*.

from a Dodgers game. "Extraordinary thing!"

A few scenes in the wartime Holmes movies refer to real 20th-century social changes caused by the war. In *Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon*, Holmes and Doctor Tobel are flown from Switzerland to England by a woman Royal Air Force pilot. Later, in *Sherlock Holmes in Washington*, Holmes is trying to find a woman on a train when a black porter says he remembers her leaving with "a lieutenant, a navy flier." The porter is certain about the rank from seeing the uniform, emphasizing his familiarity with the military. "My boy's in the army," he says with pride. "He's going to be a flier, too." Neither a white woman nor a black man would have been a military pilot before World War II.

After three war-based Sherlock Holmes movies, Universal downplayed the conflict in its remaining series entries. Studios were realizing that audiences had had enough of the war and were going to the movies to escape from it. Of course there was no hope of completely forgetting the war at the theater. For one thing, many movies were preceded by newsreels and ended with reminders to buy war bonds.

Sherlock Holmes Faces Death, a 1943 release, is set in a manor house that serves as a hospital for officers suffering from combat fatigue. Holmes is drawn into a mystery there because Watson has volunteered his medical services to the hospital.

Though the plot of 1944's *The Scarlet Claw* isn't related to the war, Holmes is in Canada for a conference in Quebec. Holmes and Watson are attending the conference of the Royal Canadian Paranormal Society, though a wartime audience would have thought of the Quebec Conference involving Roosevelt, British Prime Minster Winston Churchill, and Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King. In a patriotic speech at the end, Holmes praises Canada as a dependable ally of England and steadfast friend of the United States.

In 1946 Rathbone left the movie series and radio show, having begun to feel trapped in the Holmes milieu. But he couldn't truly escape, and his most famous role remains Sherlock Holmes. His portrayal is remembered by many fans as among the finest silver screen versions of Conan Doyle's enduring hero. To many kids who grew up in the 1960s and 1970s and watched the movies on television, Basil Rathbone *was* Sherlock Holmes.

By that time, the world war was part of Holmes's official history.

Ironically, Holmes really had figured in World War II in a roundabout way. When Britain's Special Operations Executive moved to quarters on Baker Street in London during the war, references to the fictional detective who had resided on the same stretch was inevitable. The transplanted clandestine bureau in charge of aiding anti Nazi resistance in occupied Europe was unofficially tagged with the name that Holmes had coined for the loose association of street urchins who were his allies: the Baker Street Irregulars ★

David A. Norris *of Wilmington, North Carolina, has written articles for* America in WWII *about paper money and coins, postage stamps, and V-mail.*

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Sinatramania!

FEVER FOR THE 'VOICE'

One winter's night in 1942, a horde of screaming bobby-soxers turned young Frank Sinatra from a singer into an idol.

by Tom Huntington

BENNY GOODMAN DIDN'T expect anything out of the ordinary when he was onstage for his first performance of the day at New York's Paramount Theater on Wednesday, December 30, 1942. He and his band topped a program that included the movie *Star Spangled Rhythm*—a wartime romp featuring Bing Crosby, Bob Hope, and a slew of Paramount stars—plus a couple of comedy acts and a young singer billed as "a special added attraction."

When it was time for the "added attraction," comedian Jack Benny provided a quick introduction and Goodman lifted his arms to count off the tempo. But before the musicians could hit a note, the audience cut loose with a sound unlike anything Goodman had ever heard. "What the hell was that?" he said. (Some accounts say his language was earthier.)

"That" was nothing less than the announcement of a new era in popular music. With screams and adoring cries of "Frankie!" the young bobby-soxers at the Paramount were catapulting a skinny singer named Frank Sinatra to dizzying heights of fame and adoration. It was the sound of musical tastes making a tectonic shift. "Within a few years it was the singers like Sinatra who dominated the record charts and radio shows and theater marquees, and big bands like Benny's went into a permanent decline," wrote Goodman biographer Ross Firestone. Call the phenomenon what you will—Sinatramania or Sinatrauma—but December 30, 1942, was the day Frank Sinatra truly arrived.

Francis Albert Sinatra was born at home on December 12, 1915, in Hoboken, New Jersey, just across the Hudson River from Manhattan. His father was Anthony Martin Sinatra, a sometime boxer, dock worker, and bar owner who had immigrated to the United States from Sicily as a boy. His mother was Natalie Catherine "Dolly" Garavente, a combative force of nature with roots in northern Italy. When the diminutive Dolly gave birth to her first and only child, the doctor had to haul the 13 pound baby out of her womb with forceps, giving the newborn a punctured eardrum and scars he would bear for the rest of his life. For a few moments, that life seemed destined to be short: the baby wouldn't breathe. Finally, his grandmother snatched him and held him under cold water, and he began to cry.

Frank Sinatra grew up in the house where he was born—415 Monroe Avenue—a home dominated by his strong-willed mother. Education never proved much of a draw to the boy, but singing was another matter. In 1935 he and his girlfriend, Nancy Rose

RIGHT & OPPOSITE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Before he became Ol' Blue Eyes or the Chairman of the Board, before he donned his trademark fedoras and porkpie hats, Frank Sinatra was Frankie (opposite), the obsession of teenage girls. Ear trouble got him out of World War II, but nothing could save him from the surging mania of the bobby-soxers. The adolescent female fans took a hands-on approach to their star worship (above).

Sinatramania! FEVER FOR THE VOICE by Tom Huntington

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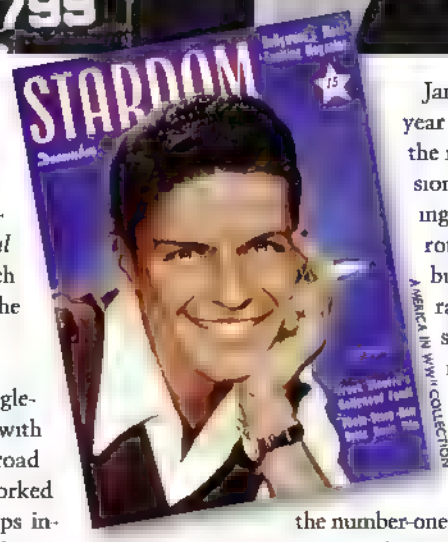

Barbato, went to see crooner Bing Crosby perform in Jersey City. "Someday that's gonna be me up there," the young Sinatra told his future wife. Later that year he appeared with a local trio on the popular talent show *Major Bowes and His Original Amateur Hour*. The host liked them so much he invited them back, and they toured the country as the Hoboken Four.

SINATRA GOT HIS NEXT break in Englewood, New Jersey, experimenting with the stage name Frankie Trent at a road house called the Rustic Cabin. At first he worked as a singing waiter, slinging steaks and chops in-between crooning. "I did a little bit of everything," he said. "I never stopped." By the time trumpeter Harry James showed up to scout local talent for his new band, Sinatra was singing a bit on stage. "He'd sung only eight bars when I felt the hairs on the back of my neck rising," James recalled. "I knew he was destined to be a great vocalist."

Sinatra was also destined to be a famous mug shot. On November 26, 1938, police arrested him as he left the Rustic Cabin and charged him with seduction. The charges were dropped when his accuser turned out to be married. A follow-up charge of adultery was also dismissed. Perhaps coincidentally, Sinatra married Nancy Barbato at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Jersey City a few months later.

James signed Sinatra in February 1939 for a two-year contract at $75 a week, and the new singer hit the road with the band. "When it comes to professional experience," Sinatra recalled, "there's nothing to beat those one-nighter tours, when you rotate between five places around the clock—the bus, your hotel room, the greasy-spoon restaurant, the dressing room—if any—and the bandstand." Sometimes Nancy traveled along and made meals for the low-budget operation.

The James band was struggling, and soon the ambitious Sinatra decided he was worth more than $75 a week. By the end of 1939, he set his sights on a job with Tommy Dorsey, leader of the number-one band in the country. James agreed to tear up his contract, and Sinatra made the switch in January 1940. He remembered leaving the James band in Buffalo, New York, watching with teary eyes as the bus pulled away into the snowy night.

He had his first gig with Dorsey that month and recorded his first hit single—"I'll Never Smile Again"—in May. The band kept up a busy schedule of touring, radio broadcasts, recording, and making appearances in the movies *Las Vegas Nights* (1941) and *Ship Ahoy* (1942). *Billboard* named Sinatra the top vocalist of 1941. He was becoming a star. "You could almost feel the excitement coming up out of the crowds when that kid stood up to sing," Dorsey said.

Sinatra continued to hone his technique, with Dorsey as inspiration. When playing the trombone, Dorsey would sneak breaths

Top: In his early 20s, Sinatra was well on his way to being discovered—if he could stay out of jail. His face ended up on a police mug shot on November 27, 1938, when he was accused of seduction. Above: The charges were soon dropped and forgotten. By December 1943, Sinatra was on the cover of *Stardom* magazine. Opposite, top: A crowd of swooning bobby-soxers had launched his star at New York City's Paramount Theater in December 1942. On Columbus Day 1944 he was back at the Paramount, but this time fans pushed their love too far. Riots broke out over access to the theater. Opposite, center: In a frenzy over Frankie, bobby-soxers push against police lines outside a Sinatra performance.

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while appearing to blow without interruption. Sinatra began working on his own breathing control, holding his breath underwater as he swam laps in the pool and ran song lyrics through his head.

The more famous Sinatra became, the more he chafed at working for Dorsey, a hard taskmaster who kept tight control over his band. When Manie Sacks of Columbia Records expressed interest in Sinatra as a solo act, Sinatra began thinking about striking out on his own, his three-year contract with Dorsey notwithstanding. Dorsey proved less accommodating than James. Nevertheless, in September 1942 Sinatra left the band, a feat that gave rise to rumors that he had mobster pals apply pressure. (Mario Puzo later incorporated the stories into his novel *The Godfather*.) Whether or not Dorsey received "an offer he couldn't refuse," lawyers and agents eventually hammered out a deal, and he walked off with a hefty financial settlement and an equal load of bitterness. "I hope you fall on your ass," he told Sinatra.

By the time of the December 1942 Paramount gig, Sinatra was feeling worried that Dorsey's parting wish might come true. Though young bobby-soxers had been paying attention to him at Dorsey's shows, many people had never heard of him, including Benny Goodman and Jack Benny. Then Benny introduced Sinatra to the crowd. "I thought the god damned building was going to cave in," Benny recalled of the "skinny little kid" making his entrance. "I never heard such a commotion, with people running to the stage screaming and nearly knocking me off the ramp. All this for a fellow I never heard of."

The reaction wasn't entirely spontaneous. George Evans, Sinatra's press agent, took credit for sowing the seeds of hysteria by paying some bobby-soxers to swoon and scream. He also gave away tickets to make sure there were no empty seats. But Evans had only primed the pump. After that, the water flowed naturally. (Literally. Some young patrons peed in their seats rather than risk losing them to use the bathroom. "At the end of the day, there was more urine on the seats and the carpets than there was in the toilets," remarked one Paramount usher.)

Singer Peggy Lee was in the house that night. "Benny played as great as ever," she remembered. "I sang my songs and got some attention, but it was electric when Frank came on stage. We used to lean out the windows of the dressing room to see the crowd of swooners, like swarms of bees down there in the street, just waiting for the sight of Frankie."

LEFT: NATIONAL ARCHIVES INSET & OPPOSITE: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Somehow skinny Frank Sinatra of Hoboken, New Jersey, had become the object of adoration of teenage girls. They began showing up outside the home he shared with Nancy in Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, sitting on the lawn and staring in the windows. They formed fan clubs and sent him letters. They snatched up the cigarette butts he threw on the ground, and they snuck into his hotel rooms. "When it snowed, the girls fought over his footprints, which some took home and stored in refrigerators," wrote Arnold Shaw in his 1968 biography *Sinatra: Retreat from the Romantic*. Many adults remained mystified. "What's he got?" asked *Newsweek*. "As a visible male object of adulation, Sinatra is baffling."

Sinatra's daughter Nancy, born in 1940, later attempted to explain the reasons for her father's appeal. "[I]t was the shock of those blue eyes, and the longing and loneliness behind their twinkle," she said. "The stance, the lean body, the quivering lower lip. The expressive hands. The soft speaking voice. The shyness. The vulnerability. That needy, hungry quality. With their boyfriends off to war, teenage girls wanted to feed him, take care of him—make love to him."

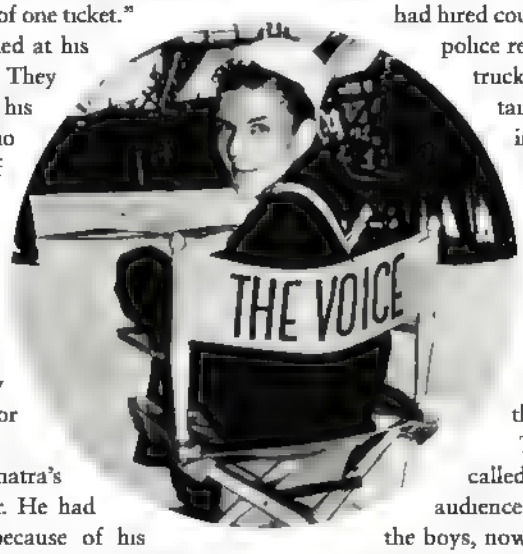
Sinatra himself said the reason for the intense fan worship was "perfectly simple: it was the war years, and there was a great loneliness. I was the boy in every corner drugstore, the boy who'd gone off to war."

Top: After an investigation dismissed charges of impropriety in connection with his draft exemption, Sinatra headed to North Africa and Europe to entertain troops. Here, he croons for 10,000 GIs at a Victory Bowl on July 1, 1945, in Leghorn (Livorno), Italy. Above, inset: Many GIs resented Sinatra for avoiding service, but he was mobbed by autograph-seekers during his USO tour. Opposite: On the set of the 1945 musical *Anchors Aweigh*, Sinatra relaxes in a chair bearing the nickname that publicity agent George B. Evans created for him.

Sinatramania! FEVER FOR THE VOICE by Tom Huntington

There was something else, too. Once people looked beyond the teenage pandemonium, they began to realize that the kid had talent. "As Frank came up to the mike, I just thought, Hmmm—kinda thin," recalled Jo Stafford, a member of the Dorsey band's vocal group the Pied Pipers. "But by the end of eight bars I was thinking, this is the greatest sound I've ever heard." A violinist who recorded with Sinatra in 1943 recalled watching him listen to the orchestra as it ran through a song for the first time. The young singer who never learned to read music stood with one hand cupped at his ear and the other holding the score. The second time he half sang along. "The third time through he took over," the violinist said. "We all knew then that we had an extraordinary intuitive musician on our hands."

Goodman's band moved on from the Paramount, but Sinatra remained. His fans, the young bobby-soxers and swooners, remained as well and would continue to show up whenever he returned. "The Paramount is the shrine of their disorder," wrote Sinatra biographer E.J. Kahn, Jr. "Many of his fans literally consider the theater their home and spend the day in it, occupying a seat through a half a dozen shows for the price of one ticket."



Fans tore Sinatra's clothing and snatched at his bow ties, which his mother made for him. They deluged him with fan mail, and for a time his mother dealt with that. Frequent radio appearances, most notably his hosting of *Your Hit Parade* on Saturday nights, further cemented his appeal, as did appearances in the movies. Although a musicians union strike prevented bands from recording in the studio from 1942 into 1944, Sinatra's new label, Columbia, managed to score a million seller by releasing his 1939 performance of "All or Nothing at All" with the James band.

The strike wasn't the only threat to Sinatra's burgeoning career. The war was another. He had originally received a draft deferment because of his young daughter, but in October 1943 he was called up. This time he received a 1-A classification. However, in December a second medical examination classified him as 4-F because of his punctured eardrum and related chronic inflammation known as mastoiditis. The draft board's doctor, Captain Joseph R. Weintrob, also said that Sinatra was emotionally unstable, that he reported himself as neurotic—afraid of crowds and elevators, prone to headaches, and "very nervous for four or five years." In addition, he was four pounds below the army's minimum weight.

Sinatra's 4-F status rankled army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. "The ears are vital to a musician, vocal or instrumental, therefore if we judge by the salaries paid, Sinatra's ears are reasonably effective," noted Marshall, who asked that someone look into "the crooner Sinatra's deferment." The FBI began an investigation, prompted by an anonymous letter forwarded by newspaper columnist and radio commentator Walter Winchell alleging that Sinatra had paid $40,000 for his deferment.

In the end, the FBI pronounced the 4-F legitimate, and Sinatra remained a civilian. In July 1945 he ventured overseas on a USO tour to North Africa and Italy, but the GIs were less than thrilled. "It is not too much to say that by the end of the war Sinatra had become the most hated man in the armed services," historian William Manchester noted

AT HOME SINATRA FEVER continued to rage. Things reached a peak in October 1944 when Sinatra returned from California, where he had been filming *Anchors Aweigh* with Gene Kelly, for another stand at the Paramount. Once again, swooning bobby-soxers turned out in droves, but this time there seemed to be an almost frantic edge to the idolatry. Columbus Day, October 11, was a school holiday and some 10,000 fans flocked into New York, crowding the sidewalks outside the theater. "Some people were in line before midnight of the previous day," reported Bruce Bliven in *The New Republic*. "A woman, in line with her daughter, long before the doors opened, said the girl threatened to kill herself if kept home."

Things got ugly when the first show ended and only a handful inside vacated their seats. Not even the extra policeman the city had hired could keep order. (There were a total of "421 police reserves, twenty radio cars, two emergency trucks, four lieutenants, six sergeants, two captains, two assistant chief inspectors, two inspectors, seventy patrolmen, fifty traffic cops, twelve mounted police, twenty policewomen, and 200 detectives," according to gossip columnist Earl Wilson.) Bruce Bliven reported that "shop windows were smashed; people were hurt and carried off in ambulances." Girls fainted, screamed, and yelled for Frankie. It was a long way from the Rustic Cabin.

The fever seemed to break after the so-called Columbus Day Riots. Sinatra and his audience were growing older. The war ended and the boys, now men, for whom Sinatra had served as a proxy returned home. The girls, now women, put away their bobby socks and saddle shoes and pulled themselves together. Life returned to normal. "For Sinatra that stand at the Paramount was a kind of culmination, the final explosive orgy of his cult of youth," wrote James Kaplan in his 2010 biography *Frank: The Voice*.

Frankie was nearing the end of his reign. He still had a few years to go before he tumbled back to earth, dragged down by voice problems and a personal life that played out in the gossip columns. By the end of the decade, his star was fading, his marriage to Nancy was ending, and the bobby-soxers had turned away. Frankie was a thing of the past. The other Sinatra—the one who would emerge from Frankie's ashes as Ol' Blue Eyes or the Chairman of the Board—was still to come. ★

TOM HUNTINGTON *of Camp Hill, Pennsylvania, is a contributing editor of* America in WWII. *His most recent book is about a general of another US war:* Searching for George Gordon Meade: The Forgotten Victor of Gettysburg *from Stackpole Books.*

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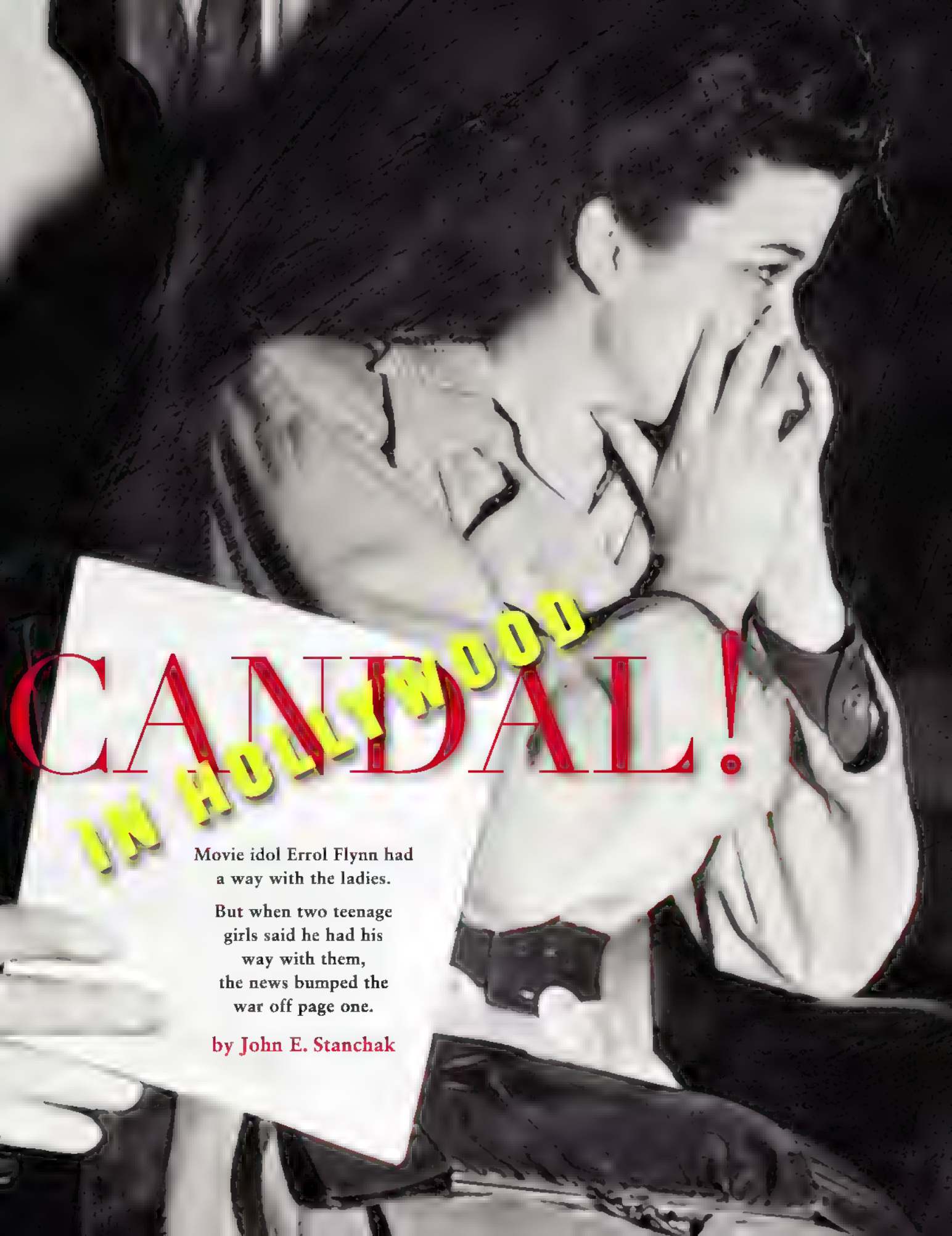


Movie idol Errol Flynn had a way with the ladies.

But when two teenage girls said he had his way with them, the news bumped the war off page one.

by John E. Stanchak

Scandal! IN HOLLYWOOD by John E. Stanchak

It was an autumn night in 1942. A pair of Los Angeles police detectives showed up at the Mulholland Drive home of movie star Errol Flynn, and a butler let them in. What followed stuck to the standard outline of a B-movie crime drama. The detectives told Flynn to get his hat; he was going downtown. He had been accused of a sordid crime.

Combat action was about to get shoved off the front pages of America's newspapers. A celebrity was setting off the largest and loudest domestic news bomb of the era and writing himself into the home front history of WWII America.

At that time, everyone knew the name Errol Flynn. He had made the hits *Captain Blood* (1935) and *Robin Hood* (1938). Debonair and handsome, charming and athletic, fearless and dashing, a lover and a pal, he was a movie-star paragon and a popular culture idol.

For the better part of a decade, working for Warner Brothers Pictures, Flynn had literally carved out a swashbuckling film image playing pirates, soldiers, and Western heroes, slaying bad men with swords or pistols while swinging from a ship's rigging or riding a galloping horse. Gossip columnists made sure fans knew about his carousing in nightclubs and flirting with other men's wives. He enjoyed hot cars and was a skilled yachtsman. "I like my whiskey old and my women young," he famously remarked.

Now, Flynn was being accused of liking his women *too* young. The LA District Attorney's office claimed he had bedded an underage girl; he was facing charges of statutory rape.

The accusations confused Flynn. While still at his home with the detectives, he asked, "What's it all about?" The officers said it was about statutory rape.

"Rape?" he recounted in his 1959 memoir. "I didn't know what statutory rape meant. I didn't know the difference between statutory rape and rape. Rape to me meant picking up a chair and hitting some young lady over the head with it and having your wicked way. I hadn't done any of these things."

He told the police, "I don't know what you're talking about."

They said, "It concerns a Miss Betty Hansen—and we are holding you.... She's a teenager and she's been picked up for vagrancy. Among her possessions we found your phone number, and she has claimed that you had sexual intercourse with her on a certain date."

The police drove Flynn to LA's juvenile hall. Attorney Robert Ford met them there and they all went in to confront Hansen and hear her accusation. Flynn recognized Hansen as a "frowsy little blonde" he had met, and he described her looks as "gruesome." He had met her at an afternoon party at a house rented by three bachelor friends. Like other women there, she flirted with Flynn, but drank too much and became ill. Flynn said he helped her upstairs to a bed and bathroom and helped her clean up. To the best of his recollection, that was the end of the matter. But the detectives said Hansen described her encounter with Flynn in some detail: "She said she could even describe you. You got undressed, but you kept your socks on."

In front of Flynn and Ford, the officers asked Hansen if the actor before her was the man who had had sex with her. She said yes, but avoided voicing details and kept her gaze fixed on the floor.

"Did you put up a fight?" Flynn's attorney asked.

"No, no," Hansen answered. "Why should I?"

The blunt reply took the officers aback. They told Flynn and Ford to go, with the old admonition "Don't leave town."

On the ride home, attorney and client decided the DA's office had a weak case and knew it. They speculated this would be the last either of them heard of the matter. But they were mistaken. On Wednesday Flynn was called before a Los Angeles County grand jury. There, an assistant district attorney introduced Hansen and a second minor, Peggy LaRue Satterlee, now age 16, to jury members. The prosecutor charged that Flynn had had inappropriate sexual contact with both girls: with Hansen at the house party and twice with Satterlee aboard Flynn's yacht *Sirocco* in the summer of 1941. The assistant DA asked for an indictment on multiple charges of statutory rape.

Hansen, an aimless teen from Nebraska, had come to Hollywood with vague hopes of employment in the movie business. She had sometimes worked as a waitress or drugstore clerk. As she confronted Flynn, she was facing four years in the juvenile penal system for vagrancy and a charge of committing an oral sex act. She would go free if she testified.

Satterlee, a California native, said Flynn had taken her on a weekend cruise around Southern California's Catalina Island. One evening aboard the boat, he invited her into his quarters to "look at the moon" from the superior vantage point of the cabin's porthole. There and then, and again the next day, he took advantage of her, she claimed. When she got back to port, she contacted her

PREVIOUS SPREAD: LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY PHOTO COLLECTION

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

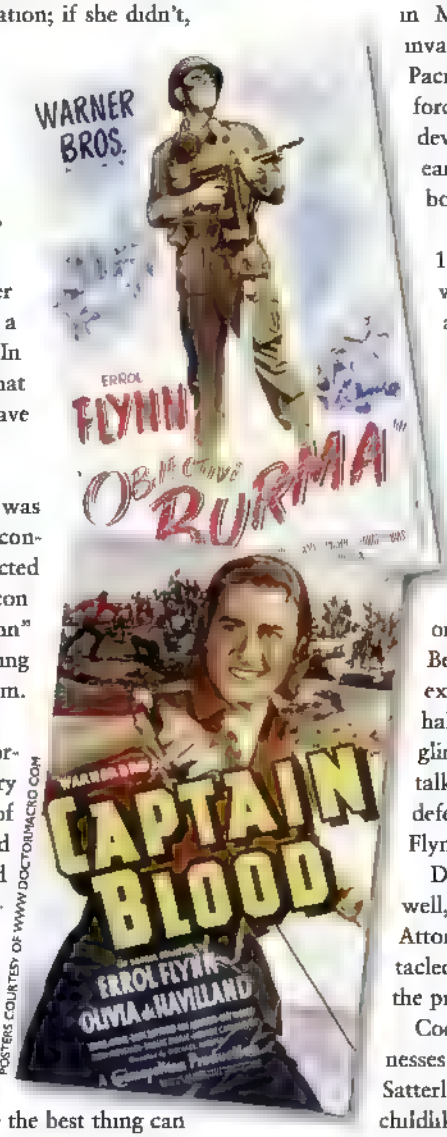
Previous spread: In Los Angeles County Court on January 20, 1943, Peggy Satterlee coyly hides her face as attorney Jerry Geisler shows her a photo of herself in pigtails. Geisler was questioning her about her age as he built a defense for actor Errol Flynn, whom Satterlee and another girl accused of statutory rape. Above: Flynn (at home with his dog in 1943) was known as a playboy. Opposite: Americans loved him as the swashbuckling star of movies such as 1935's *Captain Blood*. In 1945, he'd take his plucky style into a WWII setting in *Objective, Burma!*

mother, who took her to a hospital for examination and then filed a complaint with the DA's office.

Satterlee was nobody's picture of innocence. After her mother filed the complaint against Flynn in 1941, prosecutors discovered Satterlee had already had a "mature" relationship with another man and had undergone an abortion, then a California felony. The DA dropped the investigation. But not long after Flynn and his attorney left their jailhouse interview with Hansen, LA police arrested Satterlee at a nightclub where she was working underage as a chorus girl. The DA's office decided she should testify alongside Hansen in this new statutory rape accusation; if she didn't, they would prosecute her for abortion.

Before the grand jurors, Hansen repeated her story about Flynn bedding her. Satterlee recounted her testimony about the cruise. Flynn testified, too, denying every charge. Grand jury members considered the case quickly and returned a decision of "not true" or "not proven." Flynn was free to go.

But the matter was not concluded. Under state law, a local prosecutor could ignore a grand jury judgment and push a case to trial. In the smoggy atmosphere of 1940s LA justice, that is what happened, raising questions that have never been settled.



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LOCALLY, THE ACCEPTED background story was that studio head Jack Warner had contributed to the campaigns of thrice-elected District Attorney Buron Fitts. But he did not contribute to the war chest of John F. "Honest John" Dockweiler, who unseated Fitts in 1940, running on an anti-corruption and reform platform. When Dockweiler won, Warner lost influence.

It was well into October when LA police formally arrested Flynn on four counts of statutory rape and took him to the Los Angeles Hall of Justice for processing. While attorney Ford arranged bail, his suave client, nattily dressed and wearing his trademark pencil thin mustache, sat on a bench with other detainees, getting advice on which lockup would be the best place to serve his time. Flynn recalled one man saying, "Errol, don't get down to Lincoln. They don't give you a break down there. The county jail is the best.... For Christ's sake, a guy lives well here." Another said, "Of course the best thing can happen to you, you are sent to the Honor Farm. There it is fine. You are out in the sunshine. All you have to do is try to get a rake, and scratch up something."

Ford realized he was out of his depth. Flynn was going to need a specialist: Jerry Geisler, criminal attorney to the stars. Geisler had successfully defended clients against everything from bribery to vehicular homicide. But he was expensive, so Flynn went to Jack Warner for help. Warner offered a loan at steep interest. Business was business.

Harold Lee "Jerry" Geisler (pronounced "Geezler") had come to California from Iowa for his health after high school, put down roots, studied law, and worked for a noted local attorney. As a lawyer, he helped successfully defend attorney Clarence Darrow on a charge of jury tampering. Much later, he had defended then–District Attorney Fitts on bribery and perjury charges. By 1942 his reputation in Hollywood and Beverly Hills was such that "Get me Geisler" was slang for big trouble.

In North Africa, the British bested German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's troops at El Alamein and US troops went ashore in Morocco. The Soviet army was encircling invading Germans at Stalingrad and, in the Pacific, the Japanese were fiercely resisting US forces on Guadalcanal. And anytime there was a development in the Flynn case, news of these earth-shaking war events were pushed to the bottom of newspapers' front pages.

The proceedings finally began in January 1943. Geisler jammed the jury with nine women and only three men. Flynn's sex appeal and charm would help more if the jury were largely female, he calculated.

The court was called to order on January 9. The judge demanded decorum, but there was loud buzz when Flynn arrived, flanked by Ford and Geisler. At Geisler's suggestion, the film idol had shaved his famed mustache. He dressed conservatively but sharply.

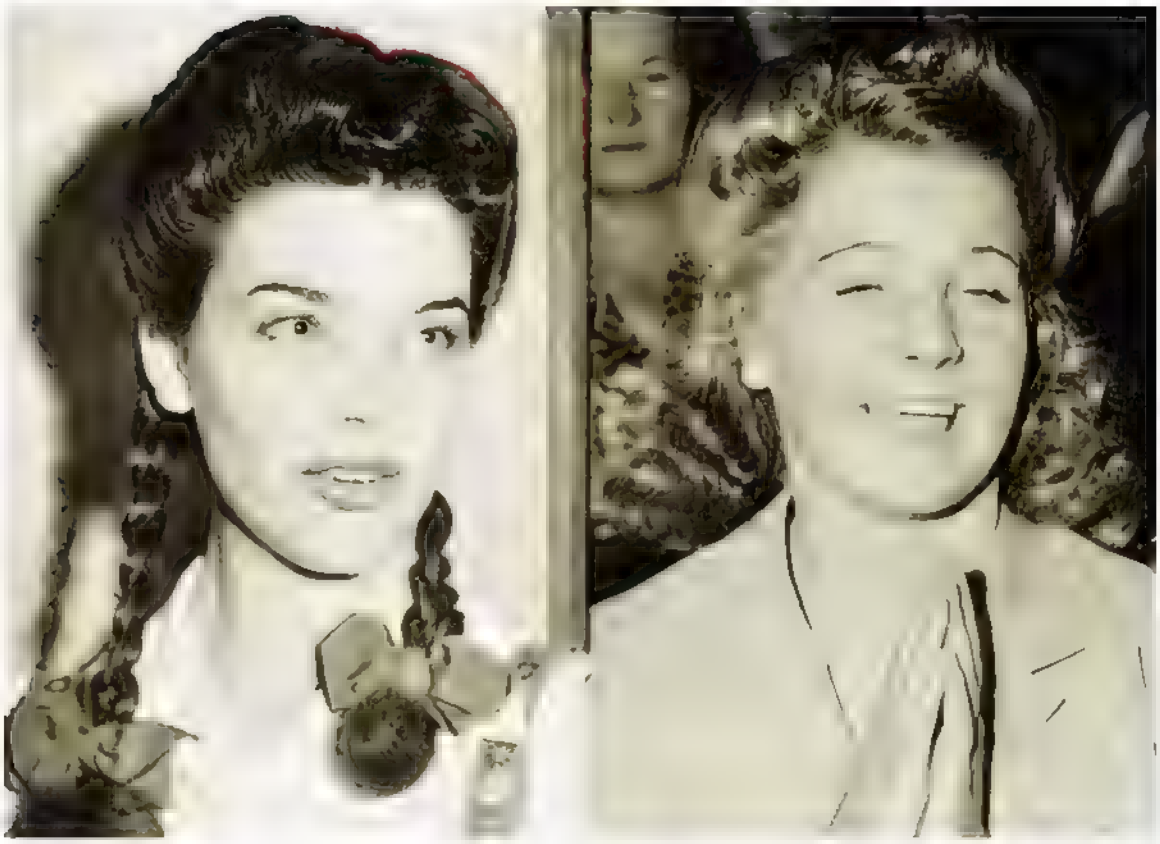
The trial convened in the Los Angeles County Court House, whose courtroom had only a select few seats for the general public. Because of the case's racy nature, minors—except the two involved—were barred. But the hallways were jammed with fans hoping for a glimpse of Flynn. Geisler encouraged Flynn to talk to the press at the courthouse. The ace defender had noticed the public support flowing Flynn's way and wanted to encourage it.

District Attorney Dockweiler wasn't feeling well, so prosecution duties fell to Deputy District Attorney Thomas Cochran, a gray-haired, bespectacled veteran of the DA's office. A few weeks into the proceedings, Dockweiler died.

Cochran was as polished in presenting his witnesses as Geisler was in selecting the jury. He had Satterlee show up in flat shoes, bobby socks, and a childlike pinafore, her hair in braided pigtails. Hansen was presented as a shabby, worn down poor soul, confused by legal sophistication and big-city fuss. Her mother came from Nebraska and told the press her daughter was "a clean little Christian girl." The prosecutor made plain that he intended to demonstrate these girls were innocents—and Flynn was a wolf.

After days of opening statements and preliminary witnesses, Hansen took the stand on January 14. A visibly sympathetic Cochran coaxed her to tell her story. It was intended to depict how a naive, hopeful girl alone and adrift in the Hollywood shark pool

Scandal! IN HOLLYWOOD by John E. Stanchak



would almost inevitably fall victim to a predator such as Flynn.

Under Geisler's cross-examination, Hansen's story became a little less woeful. At Geisler's urging, she repeated that Flynn had placed her on a bed and removed all her clothes. When the narrative came to the point where she said Flynn removed her trousers, Geisler asked if that move had troubled her. "I didn't have no objections," replied Hansen. The gallery erupted in laughter.

The next day Geisler worked to reveal Hansen's motives. "Didn't you testify before the county grand jury that you committed an act of perversion [an oral sex act]?" he asked. When she affirmed this, he added, "Do you know that this constitutes a crime in California?" Hansen answered "Yes." Geisler asked, "And you hope not to be prosecuted for this act?" She answered "Yes."

Next Geisler asked Hansen if Flynn spoke while "having the act with you." She replied, "He said I have a nice pair of breasts." Then Geisler queried, "Anything else?" And Hansen answered, "Yes. And I had a nice fanny."

Geisler pressed forward on one more detail: "Miss Hansen, the act itself lasted how long, please?" "About fifty minutes," she said. "About fifty minutes?" he repeated, and Hansen said, "Yes, that's right." "And during that entire time, he was on top of you?" asked a visibly incredulous Geisler. "That is right," Hansen answered.

Elsewhere in the world, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill were meeting with French leader General Charles de Gaulle in Casablanca, Morocco, discussing the next moves against German forces. But in Hollywood, New York, and all the America in between, for a moment nobody cared. They wanted to know what was happening to Errol Flynn.

FLYNN WAS COPING. Hanging out in courthouse hallways, he gossiped with bailiffs and policemen and flirted with Nora Eddington, the redheaded teen who worked the lobby's cigar counter. On some evenings Flynn sang and danced in a patriotic studio vehicle, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*. Before his court crisis, he and his wife, hot tempered bisexual French actress Lili Damita, known around Hollywood as Tiger Lil, had separated. But rumor had it he was keeping 18-year-old Linda Christian at his home for late-night entertainment.

On January 19, it was Satterlee's turn on the witness stand. She elaborated on her earlier teen years—trying to get cast as a movie extra, picking up small modeling jobs, and working at nightclubs. As a 15-year-old, she took a job with other shapely young women, being photographed in bathing suits with Flynn aboard *Sirocco* for a Warner Brothers promotion. She caught Flynn's eye, she said, and he offered to take her on a weekend cruise. She then repeated

Above: Flynn's trial was a national obsession, as were his teen accusers. Peggy Satterlee (left) was a chorus girl and model with a troubled past. Betty Hansen (right) drew laughs with her blunt answers and sexual descriptions. Opposite: Flynn had charm on his side. But awareness of what a guilty verdict would mean was written on his face as he arrived for arraignment in October 1942 with attorneys Robert Ford (left) and Geisler.

LOS ANGELES PUBLIC LIBRARY PHOTO COLLECTION

her story about being ravished at sea twice by the actor and about being asked to look at the moon through his cabin porthole. She added that Flynn knew she was a minor and had jokingly called her JB—for jail bait—and SQQ—for San Quentin quail.

When his turn came, Geisler pounced. He drew on a poster board a freehand representation of the *Sirocco*, its position on the sea, its direction of travel, and the location of the porthole, and had Satterlee approve each detail. When asked if this was when she looked at the moon through the porthole, she said it was. Geisler then introduced an astronomer who substantiated that the vessel, the porthole, and the people involved were in no position to see the moon while traveling in that direction on that evening.

In follow up questioning, Geisler confirmed Satterlee had had an abortion and feared prosecution if she didn't cooperate with the DA against Flynn. He then questioned a character witness, a Canadian flyer who was her sometime boyfriend. Under oath, he verified a bizarre story about taking her to a mortuary after hours, where she had frolicked with corpses in an unseemly manner. Spectators gasped and Satterlee broke out in a nervous cackle.

Next, Flynn took the stand. Once again he refuted both girls' stories, stating he had merely helped the ill Hansen to a bed at the party and had taken Satterlee only for an extended boat ride. He also claimed not to have known either girl was underage and said he never called Satterlee Jail Bait or San Quentin quail. All the while, Flynn looked, sounded, smiled, and charmed like only he could, making eye contact with the jurors and embracing the gallery with his gaze. When court adjourned for the day, he sat in the witness chair for press photographers, making a visual record of what he dearly hoped had been a triumph.

It was well into February when Cochran made his closing arguments. It was obvious Flynn was guilty, he told the jurors. It was only up to them to decide if he would serve a year in county jail or 50 in state prison. He concluded, "Send this man to San Quentin where he belongs."

The defense got the last word. "I say to you it's not the defense that has tried to smear the character of these girls," Geisler said in closing. "Unfortunately, the girls smeared themselves long before I ever heard of them or they ever heard of me."

On February 5 the jury retired to consider its verdict. It came back 24 hours later. As the foreman prepared to read the result, Geisler squeezed Flynn's knee hard. Then came the words "Not guilty." Spectators cheered. Reporters raced for phones. Flynn's ordeal was over.

The actor repaid Warner, divorced Tiger Lil, and late that summer married cigar counter clerk Eddington. Geisler went on to bigger and equally famous court battles. Satterlee disappeared, later married, and became a grandmother. Hansen evaporated from view almost completely.

What lasted was a phrase that originated around the time of the trial, and whose possible double-entendre was not lost on lusty young men, GI and civilian alike: "in like Flynn." ☆

JOHN E. STANCHAK *writes from Philadelphia.*

THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII* FEBRUARY 2013

BAT AN eyelash, SELL A bond

Hollywood's lovely ladies put their beauty to work selling war bonds to finance victory over the Axis threat.

by Carl Zebrowski

SEX SELLS. It's true now, and it was true back in the stoned innocent and wholesome days of World War II. Of course, the sell was softer back then. "Cheesecake" was the term one Treasury press agent used to suggest how the country should go about pushing war bonds to finance its massive military effort. The idea caught on fast. "Breathed no man alive in the 48 States who was not almost daily exhorted, begged and bewitched into buying war bonds," reported *Time* magazine on August 24, 1942. "Bathing beauties did it. Big, beautiful eyes and slim, wonderful legs did it."

The first war bond sale was decidedly *not* sexy. In a grip-and-grin ceremony on May 1, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt purchased a bond (known as a defense bond at the time) from Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morganthau. Seven months later, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, the war bond drive began in earnest. The bonds sold for 75 percent of their face value of $10 to $100,000 and matured in 10 years. So, a buyer who paid $75 for a bond in 1942 would turn in his certificate for a $100 payment in 1952. The return rate wasn't great—it was below market value—so a buyer had to have some patriotic commitment.

No stranger to using sex appeal to sell, Hollywood jumped into the war bond effort early on, with its wildly popular starlets leading the way. Marlene Dietrich was one of the first actresses to make her mark hawking bonds. In August 1942 the Nazi-hating German born pinup favorite was already on her third cross-country promotional tour. At one appearance, she met a working man named Edward LaCuoco who was so moved by meeting her he pledged to have more than 10 percent of his paycheck withheld for the purchase of war bonds. Dietrich, in turn, was so moved by his generosity that she rewarded him with a lingering kiss. LaCuoco reported the smooch was worth the money, and a lucrative gimmick for moving bonds was born.

Hedy Lamarr sold kisses, too. Stunning looks—Louis Mayer, the latter M of MGM Studios, said she was "the most beautiful woman in the world"—and the fact that she happened to be the first actress to bare her breasts in a major film worked to her advantage. Unlike her legions of male admirers, the Austrian-born Lamarr was hardly impressed with her own larger-than-life image, once saying "Any girl can be glamorous. All you have to do is stand still and look stupid." (She was definitely not stupid. She held a patent for technology she developed that is now used in cell phones.) Lamarr was smart enough to know she could charge a whopping $25,000 war bond per kiss and collect a small fortune for Uncle Sam.

Hollywood launched its first big bond rally in September 1942, the Stars over America bond blitz, with 337 celebrities working 18-hour days. The goal was $775 million, and the stars paid a price to reach it. Greer Garson collapsed from nervous exhaustion. Rita Hayworth was so tired she had to quit. Bette Davis needed to convalesce at the end of it all, after suffering from both physical and emotional exhaustion.

One of the original and most successful of the starlet war-bond hawkers was Carole Lombard. "I'm like a barker at a carnival," she later said. In January 1942, she set out eastward from California to sell bonds along the way to her native Indiana. When her whirlwind tour came to its end, she was supposed to take the train back to the coast, but she wanted to get home fast (most women of the time could understand—she was married to Clark Gable). She opted to fly, leaving Indiana at 4 A.M. on January 16. Her plane stopped in Las Vegas, but when it took off again, it quickly veered off course. Just 23 minutes after takeoff, miners working in Nevada's mountains heard an explosion and saw a bright flash. Search parties with mules bearing stretchers climbed the snow covered hills, and Gable himself even showed up to join in. Fourteen hours later they found the wreckage. All the passengers were dead.

Despite Lombard's tragic end, the overall result of actresses selling war bonds was positive. By war's end, seven tours of stars had passed through 300 cities and towns. They sold a healthy chunk of the approximately $190 billion total the government raised. Hooray for Hollywood! ★

CARL ZEBROWSKI *is the editor of* America in WWII *magazine.*

OPPOSITE: NATIONAL ARCHIVES. THIS ARTICLE FIRST APPEARED IN *AMERICA IN WWII* JUNE 2007

Opposite: Actress Rita Hayworth put her beauty to work selling war bonds—and, as shown here, promoting war material conservation.

19 CALIFORNIA
7W 45 54
PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY.
MY BUMPERS ARE ON THE SCRAP HEAP

★ ALL FOR THE BOYS ★

Hollywood Pinups
OF WORLD WAR II

The beauties of the silver screen went to war with America's fighting men via glamorous pinups that made GI hearts race—and reminded them that life and romance awaited after the war.

from the pages of *America In WWII* magazine

Yvonne De Carlo

BABY BOOMERS KNOW Yvonne De Carlo as the comely vampire Lily Munster in the short lived 1960s TV horror spoof *The Munsters*. But long before that, in the 1940s and 1950s, De Carlo was a pinup favorite and successful movie actress.

De Carlo was born Peggy Yvonne Middleton on September 1, 1922, in British Columbia. Her father abandoned her family when she was just three years old, and her mother took a job as a waitress. After moving to California with her mom in the 1940s, De Carlo managed to get parts—mostly uncredited—in more than two dozen films during the war years. Her break came in 1945, when she starred in *Salome Where She Danced*. Her subsequent roles were all named and credited, and in 1956 she landed the role of Moses' wife in *The Ten Commandments*, playing alongside Charlton Heston.

In 1964, De Carlo took the role of centuries old undead Lily Munster—ironic, considering how alive her pinups made GIs feel during World War II. De Carlo died on January 8, 2007, at the age of 84

PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.INFO

AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

Rhonda Fleming

MARILYN LOUIS WAS MADE to order for saturated-color movies. Her red hair and emerald eyes stood out so strikingly against her fair skin that she was dubbed the Queen of Technicolor. *Gone with the Wind* producer David O. Selznick must have realized her rarity right away when he spotted her during her senior year at Beverly Hills High School. He gave her a movie contract and the new name Rhonda Fleming.

An appearance as a dancer in 1943's *In Old Oklahoma* and a minor role in the 1944 war drama *Since You Went Away* led to other appearances for Fleming, including in Alfred Hitchcock's *Spellbound* in 1945. Her early movies were black-and-white, but she was a popular pinup with America's GIs despite not having her features shown off in full color. Her Technicolor debut came during the postwar years, when she starred opposite Bing Crosby in 1949's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. Soon after that followed the colorful royal nickname that she didn't fully appreciate. "There was suddenly all this attention on how I looked rather than the roles I was playing," she later said.

Fleming never did rise to leading lady status. She spent most of her silver screen career in B films. From the 1960s to the 1980s, she guest-starred on television shows and acted on stage. She retired from showbiz in 1990 to focus on charity work, which she continues today from her home in California.

PHOTO: MOVIE STAR NEWS

AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

Lauren Bacall

THE NEW YORK socialite Slim Keith was intrigued by the cover of the March 1943 issue of *Harper's Bazaar*. There was something about the look of the model. She showed the magazine to her husband, director Howard Hawks. Months later the 19-year-old cover girl from New York City was starring in Hawks's film noir *To Have and Have Not* opposite Humphrey Bogart. Soon after that, she was married to Bogie—and famous

One of the things Lauren Bacall was most famous for was the sultry glance that earned her the nickname the Look. It began as a fluke, she later explained. "I used to tremble from nerves so badly that the only way I could hold my head steady was to lower my chin practically to my chest and look up at Bogie," she said. "That was the beginning of the Look."

Over her 70 year career, Bacall got married twice, had three children, and starred in dozens of films, ranging from the 1953 romantic comedy *How to Marry a Millionaire* to the 1995 children's feature *From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler*. Her most recent movie, *Carmel*, was scheduled for release in March 2012. Now 87 and in declining health, she has cut back on work.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

Ava Gardner

MGM WENT EASY on Ava Lavinia Gardner. The studio let her keep her name (minus Lavinia). But her Southern drawl had to go, so Gardner worked with a voice coach. Born Christmas Eve 1922 on a tobacco farm in Brogden, North Carolina, Gardner was the youngest of seven children. When she was 18 years old, her portrait in the window of her brother-in-law's Manhattan photo studio wowed a legal clerk from Loews Theatres. "Somebody should send her info to MGM," he said.

Her family did, and in 1941 MGM offered her a contract. During the WWII years, she played more than 20 bit roles. Then her career took fire, continuing for 44 years and featuring 60 films including *Show Boat* (1951), *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1952), *Mogambo* (1953, for which she received an Oscar nomination), *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1964). Gardner was married to Mickey Rooney for part of 1942, and to band leader Artie Shaw for a year in 1945–46.

Her tempestuous 1951 marriage to Frank Sinatra ended shy of six years. Gardner then moved to Spain and, later, England. Strokes partially paralyzed her in 1986, and she died of pneumonia in 1990 at age 67.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WITH LOOKS THAT COULD equally convey a sparkling wholesomeness or a cold fury, Virginia Mayo was one of the more successful actresses of the 1940s and 1950s and a favorite pinup of the boys in uniform in World War II and later Korea. According to her daughter, the Sultan of Morocco once wrote a letter declaring, "Virginia Mayo is tangible proof of the existence of God."

From early on the girl born Virginia Clara Jones in St. Louis on November 30, 1920, seemed destined to be the center of attention. She began performing for audiences at about age six, singing with the St. Louis Municipal Opera chorus and dancing in a hotel act. She soon was recruited by traveling vaudevillian Andy Mayo and took his surname as her own before she eventually signed a movie studio contract and went on to work as a dramatic actress and comedienne in 45 films and a number of TV shows.

Over the years Mayo appeared opposite some of the world's greatest leading men, from Burt Lancaster and Robert Stack to Kirk Douglas and Gregory Peck. She reached her acting peak in a supporting role in *The Best Years of Our Lives*, which won the 1946 Academy Award for Best Picture for its depiction of GIs' troubles returning to normal life after the war. Mayo died of heart failure on January 17, 2005.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

Jane Russell

MEN NOTICED Jane Russell (actually, Ernestine Jane Geraldine Russell). That is, they noticed her 36-26-36 figure, especially the top part. That's what got the 21-year-old brunette discovered while she worked as a receptionist in 1941.

Aeronautical-engineer-turned-filmmaker Howard Hughes featured her in his pet project, a Western titled *The Outlaw*. He costumed her in décolleté blouses, even designing a special bra for her (which she never wore). Censors viewed the 1943 film as racy and blocked general release until 1946. But Hughes's nonstop promotion made Russell famous, and her countless press photos made her a favorite GI pinup. It also doomed her to shallow roles thereafter. She could act—she proved it in *Gentleman Prefer Blondes* (1953) alongside Marilyn Monroe. It was a talent she inherited from her mother, an actress and preacher whose vocal evangelical Christian faith Russell also inherited, and which she credited for helping her through hard times, including a battle with alcoholism.

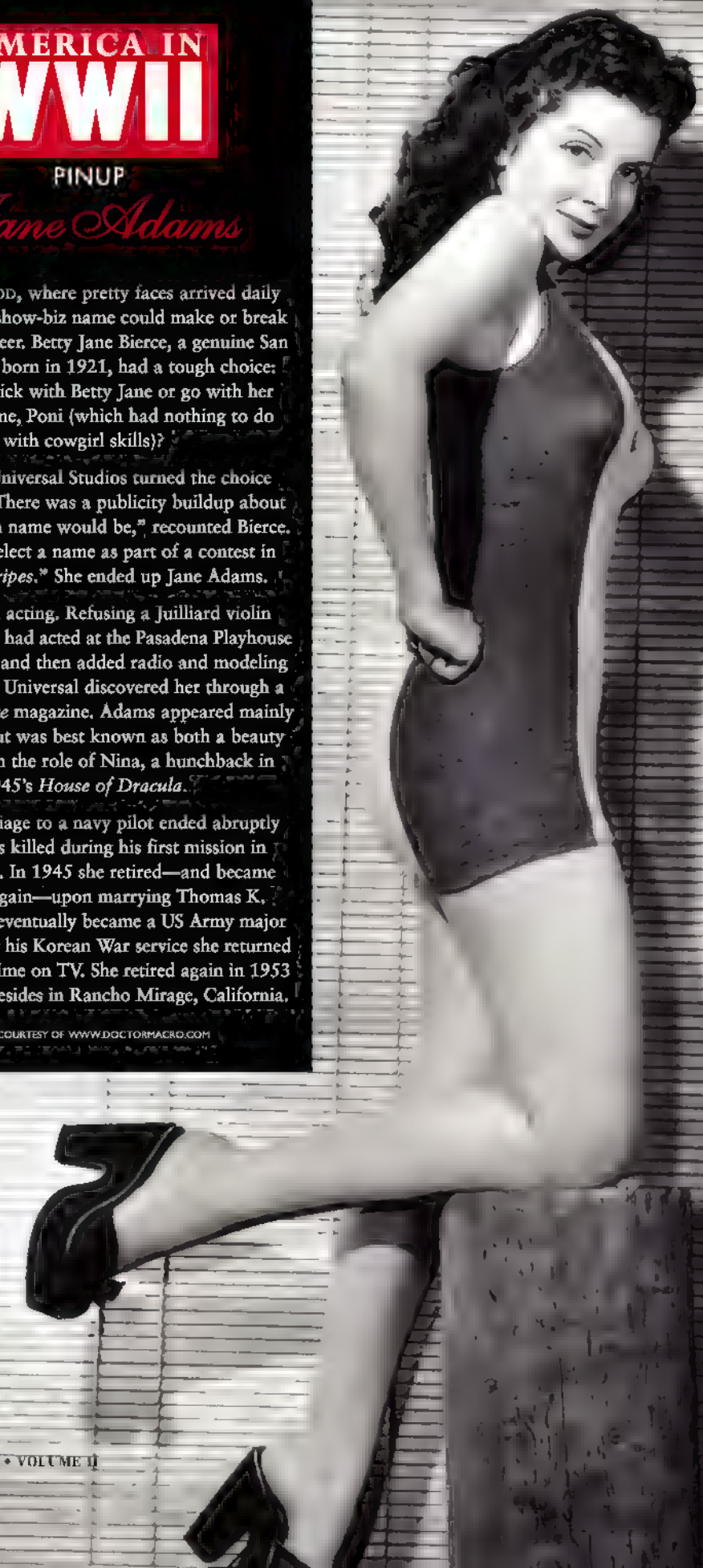
Russell was married three times, adopted three children, and founded the World Adoption International Fund. Her last film was *Darker than Amber* (1970). After that, she advertised Playtex bras. Russell died on February 28, 2011, in Santa Maria, California. She was 89 years old.

IMAGE COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.INFO

AMERICA IN WWII

PINUP

Jane Adams



In Hollywood, where pretty faces arrived daily to audition, a show-biz name could make or break an actress's career. Betty Jane Bierce, a genuine San Antonio rose born in 1921, had a tough choice: Should she stick with Betty Jane or go with her modeling name, Poni (which had nothing to do with cowgirl skills)?

In the end, Universal Studios turned the choice over to GIs. "There was a publicity buildup about what my screen name would be," recounted Bierce. "GIs got to select a name as part of a contest in *Stars and Stripes*." She ended up Jane Adams.

Adams loved acting. Refusing a Juilliard violin scholarship, she had acted at the Pasadena Playhouse for four years, and then added radio and modeling to her résumé. Universal discovered her through a photo in *Esquire* magazine. Adams appeared mainly in westerns, but was best known as both a beauty and a beast in the role of Nina, a hunchback in 1945's *House of Dracula*.

Adams's marriage to a navy pilot ended abruptly when he was killed during his first mission in World War II. In 1945 she retired—and became Betty Jane again—upon marrying Thomas K. Turnage, who eventually became a US Army major general. During his Korean War service she returned to acting, this time on TV. She retired again in 1953 and currently resides in Rancho Mirage, California.

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bridge ON THE RIVER KWAI

A dozen years after World War II, an Oscar-winning film with a whistled opening march set the standard for every WWII movie to come.

by Mark Weisenmiller

THE ACADEMY OF MOTION PICTURE ARTS AND SCIENCES HAS SPOKEN: *The Bridge on the River Kwai* is one of the best movies ever made. The Academy bestowed seven Oscars on the film in 1958, including Best Picture, and another 30 awards followed in the Oscars' wake, only confirming the Academy's judgment. But going a step farther, *Kwai*, in 1957, just 12 years after the end of the Second World War, is arguably the finest English-language WWII film ever made—a prototype for intelligent film treatments of the war down to the present day.

Kwai premiered in London on October 2, in New York City on December 18, and in Los Angeles on December 19, 1957, to excellent reviews. The fact that the movie was ever completed, however, is almost a miracle of human endurance. Like the POWs' building of the bridge in the movie, the making of the 162-minute film was one long nightmare for producer Sam Spiegel and especially for director David Lean.

Virtually everything that could go wrong did. Two crew members died in an auto accident. Arguments erupted regularly with almost all the major actors. Conditions were miserable, with extremely high humidity during the shooting in Ceylon. Bugs plagued cast and crew; actor Alec Guinness said he killed 681 flies in one day. Lean yearned for just a short break, but he was having tax problems in his native England and could not return home.

The troubles began from the start. Spiegel discovered the story in Paris, where he read the 1952 French novel *Le pont de la rivière Kwai* by Pierre Boulle (who would also write the 1968 novel *Planet of the Apes*). He immediately knew he wanted to make a film of it, but Carl Foreman, the screenwriter for *High Noon* and *The Guns of Navarone*, had already secured the movie rights. He planned to write the screenplay himself and then direct the film.

Before long, Foreman, who was still fairly new to the ways of Hollywood, realized his plan was too ambitious, so he formed a business partnership with Spiegel. As producer, Spiegel assigned Foreman to write the script and then looked for a director. He considered John Ford (*Grapes of Wrath*) and Howard Hawks (*To Have and Have Not*), among others, before hiring Lean.

When Foreman finished the screenplay, he passed it along to Lean. Lean hated it. Worse, Lean and Foreman proved incompatible. So, Spiegel fired Foreman. Calder Willingham replaced him, but he and Lean couldn't agree on the script, either, so Spiegel sacked him, too.

Finally, Spiegel signed up American writer Michael Wilson, a former marine who had won a 1951 Oscar for writing *A Place in*

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William Holden, who served in the army air corps in World War II acting in training films, plays Commander Shears in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. Shears, a POW who escapes from the Japanese, ends up in a commando unit set on blowing up a prisoner-built bridge.

In the Thai jungle, the raiders prepare their attack. At the center is Major Warden (Jack Hawkins), the British commando who blackmails Shears (left) into joining the raid when he learns Shears impersonated an officer. At the right is commando Lieutenant Joyce (Geoffrey Horne).

the Sun. Wilson arrived in Ceylon in September 1956 to help Lean write. "[Wilson] was a very civilized, good chap and he wrote the American part and sort of polished up and tightened up all that I had done," Lean told Kevin Brownlow, author of the 1997 book *David Lean: A Biography*. "It was really Mike's and my script. I give Mike a huge amount of credit—he never got any credit for it until I lately proclaimed this."

Indeed, when the film was first released, sole credit for the script went to Boulle, who didn't even read or write English at the time. Because Wilson had been blacklisted in 1951 due to supposed communist sympathies, he received no screen credit for *Kwai*. Not until 1984, six years after his death, did he receive the Oscar denied him in 1958 for Best Writing, Screenplay from Another Medium. (Foreman, who, like Wilson, was blacklisted in the '50s, also received a posthumous Oscar for *Kwai*.)

Casting brought another round of problems for Spiegel and

"madness! madness!"

After some opening footage and establishing shots, *The Bridge on the River Kwai* begins in earnest with British Colonel Nicholson and fellow Allied captives marching into a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp in Thailand in 1943.

In the main courtyard, the commandant, Colonel Saito, tells Nicholson and the others they will be put to work constructing a bridge across the river Kwai that will be a vital link along the railway between Bangkok and Rangoon, Burma (a railway known to history as the Thailand–Burma Railway, but called the Death Railway because of the Allied POWs and Asian slaves who died building it). Nicholson tells him that violates the Geneva Conventions. Saito responds by putting him in "the oven," a tiny metal lockdown box.

British POWs witness the scene and begin to sing "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" in support of Nicholson. The smart-alecky American sailor Commander Shears also sees what happens. He and two others try to escape the camp. The others are killed, but Shears gets away.

Despite Nicholson's protests, construction of the bridge begins under Saito's command but moves at a snail's pace. British and Japanese officers meet to discuss the project, and Nicholson tells Saito he and his officers will oversee construction. Now the work moves rapidly, but as the bridge gets closer to completion, Nicholson becomes more and more delusional, obsessed with the project.

Shears, meanwhile, is free and recuperating in a hospital, when he gets a visit from British Major Warden, leader of a commando school hidden in a mountaintop botanical garden. Warden tells

Near the film's climax, British Colonel Nicholson (Alec Guinness, left) and Japanese Colonel Saito (Sessue Hayakawa) have discovered the commandos' detonator wire. Nicholson, who is psychologically attached to the bridge he built, is anxious to prevent its destruction.

Lean. Their first choice for the lead role of Commander Shears was Cary Grant, but when they met with him for dinner in New York City, Grant said no. Next, Lean and Spiegel pitched the part of Colonel Nicholson to an array of actors, including Laurence Olivier, Spencer Tracy, Ray Milland, Noel Coward, and Charles Laughton. They offered the role to Alec Guinness three times. He finally accepted, and went on to play the part well enough to win the Oscar for Best Actor in a Leading Role—over a list of nominees that included Laughton. Laughton often told interviewers "I never understood the part [of Nicholson] until I saw Guinness play it."

Guinness's award winning performance came at the cost of personal aggravation for Lean, however. The actor continually second guessed the already beleaguered Lean's orders during the filming.

For Lean, the one ray of light in the shooting of *Kwai* was his working relationship with William Holden. Cast as Shears—the part Grant had turned down—Holden was the only American in

Shears he is leading a commando team into the jungle to blow up the bridge. He reveals that he knows Shears has been impersonating an officer, thereby blackmailing him into joining the team. The commandos begin making their way to the bridge.

While the prisoners perform a nighttime show in camp, the commandos mine the bridge. Shears and Canadian Lieutenant Joyce hide along the river banks. Joyce has the device that will detonate the mines. Warden mans a mortar on an overlooking hilltop.

The next morning, all the film's major characters notice the river level has dropped overnight, exposing the wire that runs between the explosives and the detonation box. Nicholson and Saito follow the wire. At one point, Nicholson, his back to the place where Joyce is hiding, pulls at the wire to try to disconnect it. Joyce seizes the opportunity and kills Saito. In shock, Nicholson calls to nearby Japanese soldiers to stop Joyce from blowing up the bridge. In the subsequent fury of rifle fire, both Joyce and Shears, who has swum across the river to help Joyce, are shot to death.

"What have I done?" Nicholson asks himself. Warden shoots off a mortar round, which explodes near Nicholson, spraying him fatally with shrapnel. As he dies, Nicholson gets up and collapses on the plunger of the detonator, setting off the explosives. A train is on the bridge at the time, and everything blows up in spectacular fashion. Major Clipton, the officer in charge of the prison hospital, witnesses all this while sitting on a nearby embankment. He runs down to the fiery mess and cries "Madness! Madness!" The final scene of the movie is the same as the first: a hawk flying high above the bridge, circling aimlessly, over a soundtrack of silence.

—Mark Weisenmiller

the cast and the only actor who didn't argue. "I suppose you could say that he was a bit of a college boy, but he was highly professional. Worked like hell, never late, knew his lines," Lean told Brownlow. "Had I said, 'We'll start the day with you standing on your head under that tree,' he'd say 'Oh, I see. OK.' And he'd do it. If you asked some of the English actors to do much less, they'd start to argue."

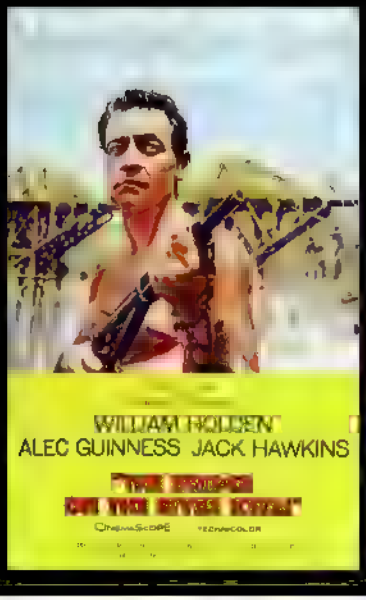
The agreeable working relationship turned out well for Holden, too. For his efforts, he received $300,000 plus 10 percent of the film's gross profits. The profits were paid at a rate of $50,000 per year, which kept him out of the top tax bracket, but still brought in plenty of annual income. Holden was well worth the investment; if not for his funny, sardonic interpretation of Shears, the film would not have been such a hit.

After the movie was released, Lean continued to face difficulties. One problem was that it is possible to view *Kwai* as anti-British. Many of the movie's British characters behave ludicrously, especially Nicholson. In retrospect, what he does and how he reacts to what happens to him offer the viewer more questions than answers

In the 1985 book *Hollywood Goes to War*, author Edward F. Dolan, Jr., a WWII veteran of the 101st Airborne Division in Europe, asks, "Why does the officer endure torture in defense of one military point and then ignore another of greater import—the prohibition against cooperating with the enemy—by allowing the enlisted troops to build the bridge and he and his officers to act as supervisors? Does he really believe that the discipline of work is necessary for the prisoners' physical and mental well being? Or does he undertake the project to quiet some restiveness in himself? Or does he wish to embarrass the Japanese commander by showing off the skills of the British? And how can he, even in his pride for both the completed project and the construction abilities of his men, so forget that the bridge is an enemy facility that he traitorously attempts to prevent its destruction?"

Other questions also come to mind: Is Nicholson racist in his attitudes toward Saito and the Japanese? Why does Saito let Nicholson take charge of building the bridge when he could have requested a Japanese military construction engineer? When Nicholson falls on the plunger and blows up the bridge at the movie's end, does he do so by accident or on purpose? (While helping to prepare the script, Lean considered showing a bolt of lightning hitting the detonation box.) Perhaps the key question is,

who's who in KWAI



Commander Shears
William Holden

Major Warden
Jack Hawkins

Colonel Nicholson
Alec Guinness

Colonel Saito
Sessue Hayakawa

Major Clipton
James Donald

Lieutenant Joyce
Geoffrey Horne

Nicholson (opposite) is Kwai's central character, the one around whom all the film's questions revolve. Why does an Allied commander work so hard to create a bridge that aids the Japanese cause? Why does he try to defend the bridge from the commandos? And, in his final, dying act, does he deliberately blow up the bridge? Or is the explosion an accident? The questions are part of what makes Kwai a great film.

does Nicholson go insane in the course of the film? (The terms "mad" and "madness" are spoken numerous times in the movie.)

One of the reasons why *The Bridge on the River Kwai* is the best WWII movie in the English language is that it provides no easy answers to any of these questions. But what makes this film, produced by a Polish Jew who liked to call himself an American, directed by an Englishman, and starring mostly British actors, Hollywood's best WWII movie?

Many things. Virtually by itself, *Kwai* created a new film genre: the escape-from-a-Japanese-POW-camp film. Though richly steeped in war, the movie dared to suggest that war is madness. It also dared to suggest that when civilizations go to war and try to dominate one another, they are both bound to fail. And it made it popular for Hollywood producers to make WWII films again (Biblical epics were the latest rage in the American movie industry at the time).

Above all, *Kwai* brilliantly presents us with dualities: good versus evil, war versus peace, drama versus humor, East versus West, and people devoted to creating mayhem versus people who are devoted to assisting and helping others (it's not incidental that Major Warden, a lover of destruction, and Major Clipton, the camp doctor, are the only characters still alive at the film's end). As in life, there is much tension, and there are no clear answers to the questions the film raises.

FOR ALL HIS TROUBLE, Lean won a well-deserved Best Director Oscar for *Kwai*, making him the first British director ever to win that award. Few argued with the many awards Lean and his film received. In a story about the film for the December 28, 1957, issue of *The New Yorker*, John McCarten wrote, "'*The Bridge* is great!' the hucksters for *The Bridge on the River Kwai* exclaim in their advertisements, and for once the beaters' big talk is not misleading." ☆

MARK WEISENMILLER *is a freelance author and international press correspondent who resides in Florida.*

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Closing Frame

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No wonder those boots are killing Herbie Brown's feet... That's where the rotund street hustler hid his dice! But sore feet are the least of the troubles confronting Herbie and fellow hustler Slicker Smith in *Buck Privates*, the 1941 hit movie that made Universal Pictures a whopping $4 million (nearly $65 million in today's dollars) and launched Bud Abbott and Lou Costello as Hollywood stars. There were good reasons the movie was such a hit. It had Abbott (Slicker) and Costello (Herbie) at their finest (including a sidesplitting manual of arms routine). It had hopping music by the Andrews Sisters. And it injected humor into something that made Americans nervous: the approach of war. The story centers around the peacetime draft—the first in US history—which the federal government implemented in October 1940 to help remedy America's woeful military unpreparedness. Slicker and Herbie end up in the army by mistake after rushing into a draftee processing center to escape a police officer who's after them because of their illegal sidewalk retail business. The cop ends up becoming their army sergeant, to everyone's hilarious misfortune. There was nothing like a good belly laugh to help Americans weather the anxiety of their times.

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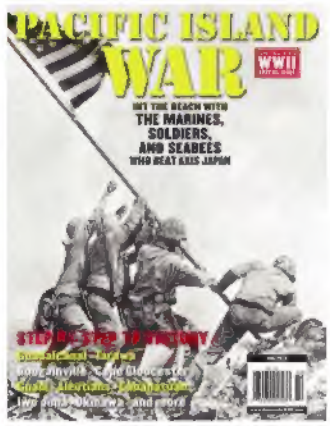

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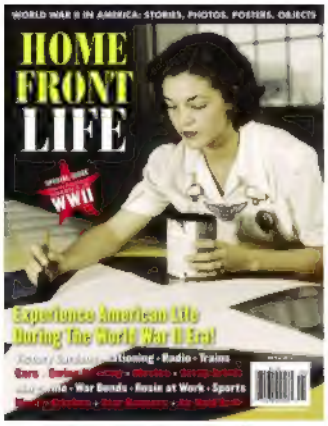
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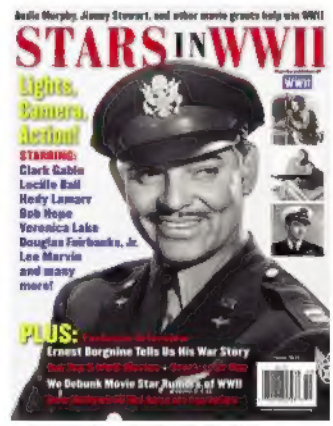

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